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THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

BY

STANLEY A. COOK, M.A.

EX-FELLOW AND LECTURER IN THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIONS,
AND IN HEBREW AND SYRIAC,
GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
MEMBER OF THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE 'ENCYCLOPÆDIA BIBLICA';
AUTHOR OF 'THE RELIGION OF ANCIENT PALESTINE';
'THE FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGION,' ETC.

God sends His teachers unto every age,
To every clime and every race of men,
With revelations fitted to their growth
And shape of mind, nor gives the realm of Truth
Into the selfish rule of one sole race.

LOWELL.

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P R E F A C E

THIS book was prepared and written in the conviction that there was an impending crisis in religious thought. The finishing-touches to the last proofs were given at the beginning of a war which will mark an epoch in history. While it had not been doubtful that a very distinctive stage in the development of thought was at hand, this war will have a significance, which one can hardly conceive, for ideas and ideals, for conceptions of humanity, righteousness, culture, and progress, and for religious, ethical, and related problems of life and thought. There will be a mass of evidence, an array of facts, and a stock of experience that will assuredly have the profoundest effect upon subsequent speculation, theorizing, and all constructive aims. Old problems will reappear, and in a fresh form ; and there will be many new ones. Newer conceptions will arise of the interdependence of all races and ranks of men, newer ideas will prevail of the meaning of the spiritual and psychical forces in man, and better notions will be entertained of civilization, culture, and religion. It is the aim of all research to take "long views" regardless of crises and wars, and few can doubt that there are problems relating to our conceptions of God and Man which will have to be handled—and that "not by might nor by power." This book, practically complete before the month of August, is an endeavour to take a "long view." Naturally it is ignorant of current events ; it treats in a dispassionate and international or cosmo-

politan spirit some grave questions which have slowly been coming to the fore, and which sooner or later will require the urgent attention of the best minds.

It happens that some of the questions with which the book deals are not entirely remote from the events of to-day. These pages argue indirectly for a general position or attitude distinctly opposed to absolute systems, and to all tendencies that cramp and confine the play of individuality. They urge unprejudiced, rational, sympathetic, and critical methods of enquiry. Man's progress is due to a combination of spiritual and non-spiritual factors. Civilization and culture involve religion; and religion—the "old-fashioned" type, with its insistence upon a transcendent Personal Deity—is necessary for progress. The steps in the advance of civilization and culture—using these much-abused terms in their widest and best sense—involve all aspects of life and thought, and they are hewn by *all* the individuals in the areas concerned. These pages may be said to plead for an independence which would enable individuals to work out their career for the general welfare of that ultimate "whole" or "unit" of which they are part; and it is to be recognized that this "unit" includes—psychologically and logically—the profoundest and ultimate realities of the Universe. In other words, our conceptions of the "whole," of which all of us are part, are incomplete unless God is included in this unit.

Human advance has been due to a certain flexibility and freedom of thought. Again and again machines and systems have broken down; and continued research may enable us to distinguish the features indispensable for progress from those that cramp it, the roads along which man can develop from those which lead to decay. It happens that these pages were influenced in no small degree by two groups of facts which are not without a wider significance. First, the present writer was much

impressed by the inadequacy, or rather, the transient character of three "cast-iron" and somewhat mechanical systems in modern research. One is a very minute and exhaustive system of Old Testament criticism, a splendid piece of scholarship, which, however, *regarded in its entirety*, has seen its day, proves imperfect, and now stands in urgent need of reconstruction. Then there is a grandiose theory of historical and mythological interpretation, an "astral" system, with many ideas of real value, but, systematized and stereotyped as it is, it has been carried to the most ridiculous lengths and becomes a travesty of research. And the third is a highly elaborate system of literary-aesthetic criticism, extremely suggestive and stimulating, but pursued in so one-sided a manner that it is likely to defeat itself. All three have very many meritorious features, they contain elements which have been, and still are, indispensable for the total progress of thought; and for these we may be grateful. While they represent essentially German enterprise, international scholarship gladly accepts, and where necessary adjusts, those elements that commend themselves. But the fact remains that when we take a long and wide view, two of these systems can be said to have only a relatively temporary and partial value; and while two are, in their systematized form, quite impracticable, one is purely wanton and absurd. To put it otherwise, here are systems which indubitably *contribute* to the progress of thought, to that "whole" of which they are part; but as organized systems, and when applied rigorously and mechanically as systems, they become an enemy to scholarship and a bar to progress. Hence the most generous recognition of their many merits must not obscure the fact that as systems they would tend, if they were blindly adopted, or if they won the day, to impede thought and not to further it; they play a part, a serviceable part, but they do not exclude others, equally serviceable.

Here, then, were telling examples of activity, admirable in certain particulars, and of temporary value, but dangerous for their tendency to thwart other individual efforts. And the examination of the vicissitudes and principles of these intellectual systems proved exceedingly fruitful for the understanding of the principles that really make for progress. Moreover, in addition to the group of facts presented by certain departments of the "world of thought," other impressive evidence was furnished by the sincere and well-meant efforts, in the "world of life," to reform people according to the ideas and ideals of the reformers. But a little reflexion shows, however, that the progress of mankind does not seem to have been due to what all would-be "reformers"—whether saints, statesmen, socialists, or scholars—have tried to *impose*, but upon what the average thought could *assimilate*. Men can be raised to a higher plane, they cannot be driven or forced there. There must be a feeling of autonomy, participation, and responsibility. The factors in progress—still incompletely known—cannot be severed, either from the principles that should actuate those who desire to benefit their fellows, or from our conceptions of God. In a word, the study of the factors in the progress of thought and in social and political life, is inextricably interwoven with our theories and convictions of God's work in the Universe. No one need doubt that all reformers and reforming aims in all departments of life and thought—political, social, and intellectual—are sincere and well-meant. From their own point of view they are doubtless noble, inspiring, and benevolent. But they are relatively specialistic and individualistic; and the point of view of "those-to-be-reformed" demands attention, the more especially in an age of democratic aspirations.

It so happens that, as in the past there have been fights for greater freedom, and for flexibility of religious and other thought—fights against systems, so, to-day, there

is a war against a system that would cramp and confine individuality and deaden the soul of man. And this system is—notwithstanding many excellent features—material, unspiritual, and anti-religious. But the fight is *for* principles that have marked past progress, for ideals and for conceptions of civilization and culture which have been effective in the past and have permitted and encouraged development. Concerned as these pages are solely with the dispassionate and unbiased study of religions, they deal with the profoundest aspects of human nature ; but the fact cannot be ignored that we are now witnessing a struggle for principles, virtues, and ideals upon which rests the future course of human history. Whatever be the outcome of the present Titanic struggle, there are ideas and ideals which, at the worst, could only be temporarily obscured. But they are bound to conquer. They are part of our profoundest conceptions of life, and outlive peoples and states. One can look back upon past millennia and perceive a unity underlying discontinuity, and an advance despite the fate of empires ; the steps in the advance have been hewn by elementary principles of right and justice which cannot be set aside with impunity. The future of religion and that of civilization and culture are intertwined, and while the historian sees the rise and fall of states and policies, the student of religions sees an increasing knowledge of the mysteries of the Universe, and a deeper and wider recognition of man's place in the Universe. In the Study of Religions we take the "long view" ; we turn from crises, epoch-making though they are, to fundamental and permanent aspects of thought, from man's conflicts with man to the permanent relationship between God and man, from the tears, troubles, and terrors of earthly life to the persisting intuitions and convictions of the underlying realities.

The Study of Religions has become increasingly

prominent in recent years. A vast amount of evidence is at our disposal, and unremitting attention is being paid to the numerous problems that the study raises. Not only are religions treated historically, not only are the highest and the lowest compared with one another, but there are many absorbing questions involved when one considers religion in its relation to mysticism, superstition, and occultism, or to political, social, and all other non-religious aspects of life and thought. Religions are studied as bodies or systems of beliefs and behaviour, and as a constituent portion of the entire life and thought of individuals and of their environment. The study seriously affects modern thought, and is affected by it. Writers differ very considerably, not merely as regards the difficult and rather technical problems, but also in their attitude to the subject generally, and in their estimate of the significance of religion for all life and thought. No one can fail to realize that these differences are in every way potent for the welfare both of religion and of the study of it.

Questions involving religion will inevitably play a large part in the history of thought in the near future. It is to be observed, therefore, that modern writers and their works serve as evidence not less valuable than the ordinary "religious" data. Moreover, the modern renewed interest in the Study—whether the attitudes are apologetic, hostile, or neutral—is a very significant fact, and we may combine it with (*a*) the revival of religious feeling in Christian and other lands, and (*b*) the widespread "psychical" unrest, which of course does not necessarily take a distinctively religious form. Here are facts which arrest attention. They point to a period of *psychical* transition in human history. There have been transitional eras before now, notably in and about the sixth century B.C., and again at the beginning of the Christian Era; the present period may be not less significant. In the very

nature of the case the Study of Religions cannot be merely of specialistic, technical, or academical interest ; the study marks a period when it is imperative that religion should be studied critically, with the aid of the best scholarship, with a rational sympathy and a sympathetic rationalism.

The aim of these chapters is to offer a contribution to the general study of religions. They handle various questions which come in between the observer and the evidence ; and they suggest a reconsideration of some preliminary ideas which are often taken for granted, and of presuppositions which it is difficult to stand outside and regard objectively. Questions of attitude prove to be of the greatest importance ; our views of religion depend upon both our attitude and the attitude of books and of men by whom we have been influenced. Three distinctive attitudes have been kept in view in these pages. The first is the sincerely and devoutly religious, which tends to be conservative and traditional, and may resent all criticism of religion. The second is the rationalistic and explicitly anti-religious, which, unfortunately, tends to be anything but rational. And the third is the neutral, specialistic, and sympathetic attitude of research, which, however, is apt to forget that, being specialistic and analytical, it is inevitably incomplete and one-sided, and, in its endeavour to be unprejudiced and " objective," may verge upon the anti-religious and unsympathetic.

These chapters endeavour to treat the subject as critically, that is, as discriminately, as possible. There is no attempt to justify any one religion ; the desire is more especially to find positions, attitudes, and methods in accordance with the best principles of research. As a consequence of this, the pages may perhaps appeal to those who will pursue the subject enquiringly and patiently, rather than to those who have already made up their minds, and who, whether they be apologists or

crude rationalists, seek merely to justify their present position. Again and again it must be insisted that the *critical* Study of Religions does not start with fixed views regarding the relative value of religious beliefs and practices. The critical student agrees with the anthropologist and the psychologist that the study of man must lay aside preliminary estimates of the reasonableness, validity or adequacy of particular ideas. The question is not, Do we agree with such and such a belief or custom? but, Was it genuinely held, and an effective or integral part of the life and thought where it is found? Indeed, from the purely religious point of view, it is obvious that the Study of Religions would be exceedingly incomplete if, influenced by particular conceptions of God, Revelation, Inspiration, etc., we start by condemning, obscuring, or refusing data which happen to offend our current religious feelings and sympathies.

The endeavour to pay heed to the three above-mentioned attitudes proved exceedingly suggestive for the treatment of the development and vicissitudes of religious and other thought. More can be ascertained by observing contrary and contradictory views than by confining one's attention to the evidence that supports one's own presuppositions. Consequently, the evolutionary and dynamic aspects of thought claim a major share of interest. And if a large place is given to "Survivals," it is because our general notion of "Survivals" is bound up with both explicit and unreflective theories of thought. At almost every turn the student is confronted with rough and ready assumptions of the way in which thought moves, and these assumptions play a large part in the popular and subconscious "philosophy" of the day. There is a common tendency—not confined to popular writers—to ascribe to our misguided ancestors all those beliefs and customs which, from our point of view—naturally a more enlightened one!—strike us as being "superstitious,"

“irrational,” and the like. This is unscientific. That there is a certain amount of truth in the Doctrine of Survivals is undeniable; the doctrine survives for the same reason that the Survival survives, because it is in harmony with *some* facts of experience. But the critical Study of Religions forces one to distinguish between individuals who live out their few decades and the beliefs and practices which flourish in their environment, and the Doctrine of Survivals is entirely inadequate when it forgets that we are human beings and do not accept beliefs and practices merely because they happen to lie within our reach. The Doctrine of Survivals is, in fact, a very handy and cheap explanation of some one else’s beliefs and practices—hardly of our own!

There is a subtle difference between particular beliefs, practices, and institutions, which exist because of individuals, and all those underlying and fundamental aspects of individuals which can be viewed psychologically. Human nature is much the same everywhere, and all our social, political, and other activities rest on the intuitive assumption that all men have some features in common despite the innumerable variations and differences. Unfortunately the usual tendency is to insist solely, either upon the resemblances, or upon the differences. The attempt is made here to do some justice to both. It seemed that one might recognize certain psychical tendencies of man, as distinct from the particular way in which the environment enables the individual to give effect to them. Just as the environment has taught men how to express their friendliness—by shaking hands *or* by “rubbing noses”—or their hostility—by using clubs *or* rifles, as the case may be—so man has other fundamentally similar features which are expressed differently according to the particular character of the environment. The child has his “psychical endowment” to be shaped and enhanced by the words he learns; and though man is not

born with "innate ideas," there seems to be "psychical material" which becomes "ideas" as the environment educes them. This analysable difference between the "psychical" aspects and the "external expression" (in language, beliefs, and behaviour) is primarily suggested by the fact that the comparative method shows that similar underlying essential features can express themselves variously in forms that are religious, or semi-religious (unorthodox, superstitious, etc.), or non-religious (in poetry, philosophy, etc.).¹

Beliefs and behaviour can be viewed quite objectively as data, and the attempt made to consider the more or less systematized or organic "bodies" of thought in order to understand their structure and movement. In this way the actual development of ideas and of all that depends upon ideas can be studied in the abstract and tested by constant reference to the psychological aspects of individuals. It is very necessary to find a way of dealing with thought and its movement less imperfectly than our static methods permit; and though one must resort to metaphors, misleading figures and images can assuredly be avoided. To some the problem "how to think about thought" may seem to be of little importance. But it is vital for right thinking whether a civilization or religion is supposed to continue by its inertia; whether Survivals persist from a long-past age like fossils or heirlooms; whether the signs of our savage and brutal nature come from distant ancestors, or whether civilization

¹ Hence I have used the formula $\iota + d = D$, meaning that every datum (D) can be analysed into (i) the known, the comparable, the essential, or that which associates it with our experience, and (d) the distinguishing and differentiating features. By extending the process we recognize that beliefs and practices *that admit of any comparison* consist of (i) the common, fundamental, and essential features, and (e) the particular external expression, or (b) the particular body of thought, context, or environment. On this see Chapter XII. (The *iota* was adopted partly to suggest that ι , like $\sqrt{-1}$, is something "unreal," but invaluable to work with and to facilitate operations.)

is merely a veneer ; and finally whether we " return " to old ideas, beliefs, etc., or, as these chapters suggest, they " reassert " themselves in a new form. Our notions and theories of the movement of religious and other thought are—it is here emphasized—of vital significance for our views of the religious and other aspects of life, and especially so when constructive aims are to the fore. Moreover, the evolution of organisms and the vicissitudes of ideas and " bodies " of thought have parallel features, and in their grouping and movement they resemble one another more than anything else with which either of them might otherwise be compared. It is probable that the study of *psychical* data (ideas, etc.) and that of *physical* organisms will be mutually helpful, in that the vicissitudes of the one will help to symbolize, or to suggest theories of, the vicissitudes of the other. At all events the biological and psychological problems cannot be kept entirely apart—life and thought are fundamentally related.

The attempt to deal with the analysis and the movement of religious and other thought should enable us to distinguish the immediate, more tangible, and " penultimate " problems from those more remote, more ultimate—yet more vital. This is to distinguish ideas of Reality from the Ultimate Reality, the more transient data of life and thought from the more " structural," skeletal, and fundamental dispositions, tendencies, and processes. The more objective data of life and thought are thus severed, for analytical purposes, from the facts of experience, whatever the experience may be. Our ideas, thoughts, etc., express and interpret experience, and a distinction can be drawn between knowledge *about* things and knowledge *of* them. Religion, too, speaks of God's attributes, but man—as man—does not and cannot know God directly. The comparative study of religions sets on one side questions of inspiration, revelation, and the like, and compares man's ideas of his ultimate realities.

It can distinguish attitudes psychologically and psychically similar from the beliefs and practices which, if we take a "long view," are relatively external and alterable. The study of the profoundest aspects of man, his attitudes, outlooks, and syntheses, and their nature, attributes, and rationale, appears to be of great value for the treatment of the problems of religious reconstruction. The study may allow one to find in the world's religions the essentials of a religion that would be universal, comprehensive, and progressive. The hope of a Universal Religion may be only a dream. But we may be able to distinguish between an elaborate, exhaustive, and systematised *corpus* of religious and theological doctrine—one that might tend to fix the limits of mental activity and might be unsuitable to some levels—and something structural or skeletal, which would embrace the essential facts of man's psychical nature and the essential factors in development, and would give different levels an opportunity of progressing along their lines and of thus contributing to the welfare of all. Or is this also only a dream?

If the Old Testament and its criticism may seem to claim an undue share of attention in these pages, it may be said at once that some difficult questions relating to "primitive" thought and the "evolution" of Israelite religion stimulated the main enquiries. And apart from this, the developments involved in the Old Testament are very suggestive. There is, first, the development which produced the Sacred Writings of Israel. There is, next, the development from the Old Testament (*a*) to Judaism, and (*b*) to the New Testament and Modern Christianity; and this is not to be confused with that of the various lands whose vicissitudes are bound up with their history. Again, there is the development (*a*) of the study and criticism of the Old Testament, and (*b*) that of one's own beliefs, attitudes, syntheses, etc. Thus there

are several types of genetic development which offer abundant material for suggesting and testing theories of the evolution of religious and other thought.¹

Moreover, the Biblical religion with which we are familiar comes between (a) all that marks the best of modern culture and Christian theology, and (b) the old Oriental religions which, amid a variety of types, allow one to pass insensibly from Christianity and the Old Testament to religions "barbaric" and "savage." Thus can one bridge the gulf between the highest religions and the lowest, and one is compelled to avoid the error of those who imagine that the savage is psychically or psychologically different from ourselves. The existence of fundamentally similar psychical features among all races of mankind, and the impossibility of finding absolute gaps in the gamut of religious beliefs and customs, emphasize the necessity of distinguishing the essential *psychical* facts from the (relatively) external phenomena—the manifold varying religious ideas, beliefs, and practices. And finally, the Old Testament is a great field of study with different methods, attitudes, schools, etc. Not only does it require the application of critical principles of research, but the effort must also be made to do justice to (a) both the purely critical and non-religious (*not* anti-religious) aspects, and (b) the religious value of the Bible with one's own personal religious convictions. Biblical criticism and the critical Study of Religions cannot be pursued by opposing methods: the two subjects are mutually helpful, and the best conception of the Bible in the light of modern knowledge will

¹ At the risk of repetition it is necessary to point out how important it is to find a reasonably accurate idea of the evolution of thought. Our ordinary theories of the progress of religious and other thought are bound up with false theories of "Survivals." But the common assumption that an advanced material culture is necessarily accompanied with lofty ethical and moral principles has been rudely shaken by current events.

inevitably be closely connected with the best possible conception of the Universe.

It may be mentioned that Chapters I.-XI. go back to college lectures given in the winter of 1912-1913. They were followed by an independent booklet, *The Foundations of Religion* (in "The People's Books"), and some special points were treated separately in a paper on "The Evolution and Survival of Primitive Thought," in *Essays and Studies Presented to William Ridgeway* (ed. E. C. Quiggin, M.A., 1913, pp. 375-412). These connect themselves with Chapter XII., which, based on a college lecture given last March, handles provisionally some difficult though fundamental questions arising out of the preceding chapters. It must be quite frankly confessed that the preparation of Chapters I.-XI. brought problems which lay quite outside my reading. Step by step one was led into the vast fields of psychology, logic, and philosophy; and here, alas! is no highway so that "the wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein." One could scarcely hope to escape the dangers of dilettantism. On the other hand, again and again, one had the feeling that the controversies and difficulties in these fields were not unrelated to those already familiar in Biblical Criticism and Comparative Religion. There seemed to be similar problems of personal experience, its expression and interpretation, of the "evolution" of thought, and our ideas of all that wherein thought is concerned. Fortunately, these problems lie outside the plan of this book. It is enough to investigate "psychical realities," although it must naturally be recognized that these (*e.g.* belief in a Deity, in ghosts, fairies, demons, etc.) are based upon experiences which, whether or no they are rightly expressed or interpreted, are "realities" of a more fundamental order. Grave problems of "Supernaturalism" remain.

All religions reflect psychical states, and the objective investigation of the religious beliefs and customs is not to

be confused with the question whether the states and experiences could be reshaped or re-expressed in a way more in touch with the growth of knowledge, ethics, etc. We are necessarily influenced by the ways and modes of thinking inherited in our environment, and these, in some respects, belong to a state of knowledge inferior to that of to-day. It is our way of thinking which makes the next world seem so distant, or which causes us to regard God as far away; but just as a sudden death makes the difference between ordinary life and the mysteries of Eternity, so the Ultimate Realities are near—perilously near—us at all times. The distance between God and man is that between one thought and another.¹ Among the duties that confront this age none can be so responsible as the attempt to restate experience in harmony with modern knowledge. Here the Study of Religions has much to contribute, but psychology, logic, and philosophy are also indispensable. There are technical enquiries which only the expert can undertake, and these chapters will have achieved their aim, if they serve to suggest lines along which enquiries may be pursued by those more competent than myself. Thought is becoming international, and critical and sympathetic study will assuredly contribute fruitfully to the vital constructive universalistic problems that will sooner or later demand attention.

It remains to say that in the nature of the case I have been indebted to many sources of information, and to many friends and acquaintances for direct and indirect help of all kinds. A complete list would be impossible. Among the works and writings which have been especially stimulating I may mention the article by Ibsen referred to on p. 335; I. E. Miller, *The Psychology of Thinking* (New

¹ A new effort to handle the problem of transcendence and immanence (or immediacy) is made in Chapter XII., especially §§ x., xi. (a), xxii., xxiv. (a); some better way of "thinking of" or of "imaging" the data ought to be found, and I quite recognize that my attempt is provisional.

York, 1909) ; Irving King, *The Development of Religion : A Study in Anthropology and Social Psychology* (New York, 1910) ; J. T. Merz, *A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1904-1912), and R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (1909), *Birth of Humility* (1910), etc. Above all I am deeply conscious of my indebtedness to my wife without whose constant comradeship and unselfishness my work could hardly have been undertaken and accomplished.

STANLEY A. COOK.

CAMBRIDGE,
September 1914.

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THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

CHAPTER I

THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

The Study of Religions, a new and very important branch of research.—The Study of Religions is a study which, starting from small and humble beginnings, has blossomed forth in a relatively short time into an immense and somewhat unwieldy branch of research. It claims attention on account of its immediate bearing upon all serious thought, whether that thought be styled religious or not. How important it is may be realized by observing its rapid progress, especially during the last two or three decades, a feature due not merely to the attraction it has had for students of different standpoints and interests, but also to the increasing recognition of its value for the study of profound problems of modern life and thought. Its importance may also be gauged by the very significant tendencies on the part of those who have devoted themselves to it or have utilized its conclusions.

It is the unprejudiced comparison of all religious material.—The Study of Religions is, in fact, the unprejudiced and uncompromising investigation of the religious data furnished by man, ancient and modern, savage and civilized, uneducated and educated, the man in the street and the student or philosopher in his library. It does not start with the assumption that some one religion is “ true ”

and that the rest are "false," or even that one is "truer" than others; it deals with the religions of the world as a subject for impartial and consistent research. The study draws its evidence from the most backward of races, from the lowest and crudest types of religion, as also from the highest, the most refined and the most spiritual; it utilizes the most naïve and rudimentary forms of thought as also the most reflective, complex and philosophical. Whatever religion has been, whatever bears on it, and whatever secular aspects of life have been bound up with it—all supply material for this study. This study throughout finds numerous points of resemblance as noteworthy as those of difference, and, regarding the evidence critically and in the light of history, it classifies the data, formulates theories and hypotheses, and reaches conclusions which, however provisional, affect our conceptions of the past history of man and our speculations of his future. The value of a study lies in its application to experience and in its implications for the future, and this study, like perhaps no other, touches the heart of all that is bound up with man's deepest ideals and aspirations.

It involves several far-reaching enquiries.—The beliefs and customs of long-past ages or of remote and savage peoples may appear at first sight to be merely of academic or specialistic or dilettante interest without bearing upon modern civilization and culture. But when similar forms of religious activity or expression are found to prevail over widely-separated ages or lands, and when, as is often the case, there can be no question of historical contact or influence, this similarity demands an adequate explanation. When, moreover, careful comparison discovers in Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, or Buddhism, certain phenomena with analogies or parallels in ancient or savage lands, modern religious thought is at once affected. And again, when such faiths as these can be traced in history, and can be shown to be the

outcome of a lengthy and continuous development, the roots of which are anterior to their actual appearance in the field of history, and when they now present the phenomena in a form other than that which they originally had, it is natural that the endeavour should be made to correlate the various results. Hence, in addition to comparing data, the study seeks to determine the significance of the resemblances and differences for the character of religious thought and of its evolution, and, treating the data much in the same way that the data of organic life have been treated, it attempts to trace the outstanding characteristics of the evolution of religion from the lowest and most rudimentary forms to those which distinguish the highest or the most predominant religions of the present day.

These affect ideas of the development of thought.

—Thus, the study has a twofold aspect in that it concerns itself with these two questions: What is the significance of the differences and resemblances which we find in the religions of ancient and modern times? What is the significance of the evolution or development of religion, glimpses of which we can readily discover when we trace a religion in the light of its history or proceed to compare it with the religions of other lands or ages? In other words, the comparative method of treating religious material does not and cannot confine itself to mere comparison: it does not and cannot stop when it has discovered wherein religions differ or agree; it must necessarily turn to the problems which it has raised, and in so doing it affects more or less immediately our conception of the nature and tendencies of thought.¹

¹ The method of comparing data is usual in other fields, for example, in geological research. "It has often been insisted that the present is the key to the past; and in a wide sense this assertion is eminently true. Only in proportion as we understand the present, where everything is open on all sides to the fullest investigation, can we expect to decipher the past where so much is obscure, imperfectly preserved or

Opposing views in regard to the development of religion.—It is impossible to understand adequately any situation unless one can view it in the light of its development, and it has now to be observed that the result of continued research in the comparative Study of Religions has been to emphasize two leading tendencies which are diametrically opposed. From a survey of the evidence some students have been influenced mainly by the remarkably close relationship between the cruder and lower types of religion and those the most advanced; whereas others have been more impressed by the no less remarkable differences between them. Through the comparative method it has seemed possible to attack or to weaken, explicitly or implicitly, intentionally or unconsciously, the foundations of modern religious belief both Christian and non-Christian, to deny the vitality or the reasonableness of faiths cherished by millions, and to point to alleged superstitious or irrational features which—it has been suggested—persist as “survivals” from earlier and less advanced stages of thought where they more properly belong. But, on the other hand, it has also seemed possible to find a deeper and a fuller meaning in the essentials of modern religion, to enhance the superiority of Christianity over all other faiths, ancient and modern, and to see in the very development of religion from lowly levels a guarantee of its power of reinterpreting itself from time to time, and of advancing to higher stages which shall be more in harmony with the highest thought of the present day.

A sound idea of the development of religion is needed.—When we adopt the comparative method and, in the light of modern knowledge of evolution, consider the numerous connexions, links, and points of contact

not preserved at all” (Sir Archibald Geikie, art. “Geology,” *Ency. Brit.* 11th ed. vol. xi. p. 638*d*). Geology in its turn does not leave untouched the many issues which arise in the course of this comparison.

among the world's religions, we may be influenced much in the same way as when we regard the evidence for the essential oneness of all animal life; we may in fact fix our attention *either* upon the closeness of the relationship, *or* upon the profound differences between the lowest and the highest types; *either* we may feel how inevitably man is chained down to the line along which he has evolved, *or* we may look forward in the hope of traversing steps in the future as significant as those which man has already taken in the past. Naturally, a truer attitude is one that takes account of both features, and this is the attitude which the youthful Study of Religions has yet to find and to adopt, since it goes without saying that a one-sided attitude must inevitably injure any treatment of the subject.

Objective development not to be confused with theories of development.—Now, the different tendencies and the different attitudes to religious material are exceedingly instructive. While there has obviously been a development of religion in the world's history—*i.e.* since the days of prehistoric man—it is necessary to bear in mind the difference between evolution in the organic world and that where thought is concerned. By continued observation and experiment facts have been collected which justify the evolutionary hypothesis of man's ancestry, but there is an important difference between the *objective* evolution of man and the history of the *subjective* beliefs or conclusions of different people touching his origin. As is well known, there is some divergence of opinion regarding certain aspects of the theory of evolution. Although it has established itself and is now applied in many fields of research far and wide, the mere fact that among the specialists there are certain differences of opinion, certain modifications, and varying lines of advance, clearly shows that it is not so much the tangible data of perception as the interpretations of them that are at stake. The

intangible conceptions of the intellect are involved; the "personal equation" must be taken into account.¹

Different standpoints are due to different individual minds.—Now, the comparative Study of Religions has to deal with data which in some cases may easily have been erroneously transmitted, in others may still more easily be misinterpreted; but they are—for purposes of research—objective data, whatever be their source or value, and when one proceeds to the necessary task of formulating some synthetic statement of the results of interpretation, comparison, and classification, everything depends upon the particular prejudices or mentality of the individual. It may be simple to demonstrate the structural similarity subsisting in the organic world, yet there was a lengthy evolution of thought before this could be done with the fulness and completeness of the trained demonstrator in a modern class-room; but when one has to handle the intangible forms of thought, what elements are to be viewed as structural? Yet those who compare different bodies of thought find resemblances which are felt to be fundamental, essential, and structural. The difficulty is to find essential facts, sound interpretations, and valid criteria, and the problems involved are found to turn inevitably upon the analysis of thought and of bodies of thought—not upon accuracy and logical argument alone, but upon accurate, or rather less imperfect, ideas of what Thought is. It is only too easy to compare some things that have no right to be compared, and to ignore the underlying identity in others. How unlike are the wing of a bird and the arm of a man,

¹ "The scientific worker is well aware that in measurements and observations the accuracy attainable is only approximate, and that the degree of approximation varies with the individual. The personal equation has been for a long time frankly recognized and allowed for in astronomy; it is also sometimes estimated in chemistry and physics; but it must be recognized all round. Science begins with measurement and there are some people who cannot be measurers. . ." (J. A. Thomson, *Introduction to Science*, p. 19).

how like are the wing of a bird and that of a butterfly ! but in the first pair there is a structural kinship, and in the second there is no real resemblance. We commonly deal with objects of thought as though the " morphology " and " physiology " of thought were known to us, but the fact that we can differ so diametrically shows how little of it we really know. The fact that the Study of Religions has permitted very divergent tendencies is enough to indicate that if it is to be pursued effectively something more is needed than accuracy of observation and objective comparison of the data. The evolution or development of religion in mankind is an indubitable objective fact, but all research into its nature and significance is necessarily hampered by the unavoidable limitations of individual subjectivity. This of course is true of all research, but something can be done by avoiding the errors which have been brought to light in the successive stages of past progress, and by seeing how they have arisen. In the meanwhile it is enough to emphasize the fact that the most objective of data, even those of perception, do not necessarily occasion valid inferences or interpretations, for if they did there would not be the striking differences of opinion that now prevail.

The Study of Religions emphasizes conflicting attitudes to religion.—In the opinion of some, perhaps of many people, the Study of Religions seems to have been the cause, more than any other study, of loss of faith in Christianity on the part of well-informed individuals ; and it has been said that people in Christian lands incline, as they grow in intelligence, to be increasingly indifferent or hostile to orthodox Christianity. It is sometimes supposed that comparative research, in illuminating the prevalence of alleged superstitious elements in religion, shows that, even though religion may have been beneficial in educating man up to the stage reached by modern intellectual culture, it has served its

purpose. It has been our "tutor" unto the stage of thought where it is no longer necessary. On the other hand, other individuals who are not necessarily less intelligent do not subscribe to these views. They point out that if religion has lost its hold, other causes have contributed apart from modern study, and if religion has been beneficial in the past, it is as likely to answer human needs in the future. Indeed, so far from regarding religion as a temporary benefit in the lengthy education of mankind, the alternative position would regard any modern attitude of indifference or hostility as itself nothing more than a temporary phase. Such a view as this would justify itself by the observation that any attitude unsympathetic to religion stands too far away from the general development of thought and is too "specialistic" to be treated as a phase likely to be predominant or persistent.

The variation is due to individuals, who are also our material for the study of religion.—It is unnecessary to specify more fully the two opposing tendencies in which the study is involved, and it is not difficult to see that they are influenced by the attitude of the individuals concerned. Evolution in the organic world has to do with a development which reaches a definite culminating point in man; we cannot conceive any further stage in organic evolution. On the other hand, where religion or religious thought is concerned, these two diverging tendencies are influenced by the conscious or unconscious assumption that we can look back on past history and evaluate the evolution of thought.¹ Some more decisive, less subjective test must be found. However, these tendencies are extremely instructive because, on the one hand, it might seem that

¹ Different individuals (Christians, Buddhists, rationalists, etc.) would see different lines of evolution, and would have different conceptions and ideals of the future course.

the Study of Religions deals with data which now prove to be without any significance for intelligent people who have outgrown the stage where they were effective; while on the other, the study is felt to be of vital importance because in all history religion has been interwoven with other aspects of life, and any complete severance of the secular from the sacred, as frequently seen at the present day, lies outside the stages of development. These alternatives allow us to perceive that if the study deals with the various attitudes of man in all that is commonly included in the category of religion, the various attitudes at the present day, when thought is exceptionally strenuous, provide useful material for understanding varieties of outlook. Hence, not only is the study concerned with the data of religions, the outlooks of men of ancient or savage lands, but one cannot ignore the significance of modern outlooks in civilized lands, whether they be religious, non-religious, or anti-religious.

And material for the scientific study of all thought.

—The fact that intelligent people differ as regards data of conception or perception is so common that we usually take it for granted, whereas it is fundamental for any investigation of the deeper aspects of thought. Not only is it a question of validity of inference, but it is one of the significance of conflicting inferences, and if this means that in an age of keen intellectual activity some inferences must be erroneous, may it not be thoroughly irrational to assume that thought has reached the stage where decisive and final inferences are legitimate? ¹ The fact that our particular interpretation of the Universe is not accepted by others is not a proof that they are less rational than we are, but an invitation to consider why different stand-points come to be held by different people. In under-

¹ So, while this keenness impels individuals to change, repair, or reconstruct, conflict of thought is a warning that one-sided or partial solutions are harmful.

standing this we understand not only the conflicting positions, but a good many other things besides.

Meanwhile the variations hinder the progress of the study.—From a scientific point of view the prevalence or persistence among ordinary individuals of beliefs and practices which we reject, repudiate, or are unable to understand is distinctly important for our conception of general human nature. It is perfectly unscientific to regard such phenomena as based upon “illusions” as “irrational,” or as “survivals” from some past age; not in this way can the study of mankind progress. That the Study of Religions is still at a youthful stage is a conclusion that may safely be drawn. No doubt there may be those who are quite convinced of the soundness of their own standpoint, whatever it may be, but so long as there exist fundamentally contradictory standpoints, the further progress of this, as of other studies, is hindered. The particular standpoint appeals to those who are prepared to accept it, but makes little or no impression upon those who in all sincerity hold or tend to another. It is irrational merely to reject or condemn the other standpoint.

And the study, now popularized, needs guidance.—Now, we may be sure that this study cannot be ignored. It has become popularized, its diverging tendencies are well known, and, as is customary, those who use it at second-hand commonly accept and retail those conclusions which happen to agree with their presuppositions and experience. This illustration of the way in which thought moves by a “selective process” is an argument for pursuing the subject as critically as possible. And a stronger argument is found in the fact that the study cannot be arrested by enquiring whither the existing tendencies lead. It is too late to ask whether it is harmful or prejudicial. Powerful movements of thought are not stopped or shelved, they work themselves out; and

if the endeavour be made to guide the course in accordance with the best knowledge, the soundest principles, and the freest enquiry of which the individual is capable, we may be sure of one thing : continued study will be found to provide its own solution of the problems.

It must be pursued to the end.—For example, in the criticism of the Old Testament certain tendencies which seemed to be entirely detrimental to the cause of Christianity, have proved to be distinctly helpful, in that they have brought about a development of ideas which, in the minds of those who accept them, give a fuller and more permanent value to the Bible. True, this is not a completely satisfactory illustration, because the criticism of the Old Testament, like the comparative study of religions, step by step involves very extensive complex questions which cannot be readily settled. That is to say, when in Old Testament criticism we gain relief from one difficulty, another presents itself, and there is continuous need for readjustment of some portion of our current stock of ideas. The necessary complete readjustment may seem enormous from certain standpoints, but we should not forget, first, that readjustments have had to be made in the past ; secondly, they have conduced to progress ; and thirdly, that the rise of problems, however serious and however hopeless they may appear, is but a call to endeavour to cope with them rationally.

The study marks an age of unrest.—There yet remains the strongest argument. The conflicting tendencies in thought not only tend to become more serious, but there comes the time when it is felt that some solution must be found. The conflicting tendencies are not to be viewed superficially, but in their context. What is their context ? It is hardly necessary to point out that the diverging tendencies, whether in Biblical criticism or in the comparative study of religions, cannot be severed from the widespread intellectual, mental, or psychical

unrest of this age. Neither scholars nor ordinary men are differing in their tendencies for reasons that can be lightly put on one side, and for purposes of critical investigation it is a necessary postulate that all are sincerely and conscientiously travelling along lines that seem right and proper to them.¹ In working out their own mental or psychical development as individuals, they are combining consciously and unconsciously to bring the next stage in the history of thought. At the present day there is the keenest activity in the various departments of research leading along paths the outcome of which cannot be foreseen, so heterogeneous are the varied tendencies, so significant are they where they converge. Moreover, people are awaking to new aims and desires which demand some satisfaction, and we are thoroughly familiar with the diverse and often disquieting phenomena in the lands of the white man. These phenomena cannot fail to impress those who have paid any attention to the features that characterize great movements in the history of thought in the past.

A period of transition affecting many lands.— Moreover, we cannot ignore the significance of the movements of thought in India, China, Japan, and the Mohammedan areas. And if we turn from these to less civilized and so-called savage lands, the changes introduced by the white man have been slowly gaining force, disturbing inherited forms of society and belief. In many cases old-time customs and sanctions have been gradually losing their authority. Christian missionaries, it is true, have often succeeded in replacing lower forms of religion by higher ones, but here and there a time has come when the natives themselves have discovered that Christianity

¹ The rationalistic view implying that one's opponent is neither sincere nor conscientious is a false dogmatism, the antithesis of rational enquiry, and as harmful as the theological dogmatism of the past. Obscurantism, too, is not confined to theologians.

itself stands on trial. In one place we find that whites have consciously or unconsciously invalidated the higher faith which had been introduced, and in another, by their attitude to the religion of the natives they have weakened a cult, which if it be called "superstitious" had at least bound the social life together.¹ It is very difficult to hold the balance fairly in any endeavour to estimate the situation in uncivilized and savage lands, but against the advantages introduced by the white man must certainly be set the many cases where the social life has been tragically disturbed, and the communities are faced with problems, which are relatively as serious as those that confront us, and which are due to our presence. Under the influence of lofty ideals, efforts have been made to introduce European principles, customs, and institutions, and very often the old bottles have not been able to contain the new wine.² Whether it be that man as a "transformist" has to learn that there are limits to the power of raising other levels of humanity, or, in his experimenting by a sort of "trial and error" process, has yet to discover the necessary conditions for success, or in his zeal for reform has ignored the teaching of anthropological research, the phenomena present everywhere an inchoate, irresistible world-movement in which the Study of Religions is directly involved. Here is a new aspect of the "white man's burden."

¹ If men have become Mohammedans in order to apply the Mohammedan law and divorce former wives, they have also become Christians in order to get rid of superfluous wives and families; Christian converts have even been advised by pastors to put away all their wives except one and become monogamists (Sir Richard Temple, *The Cambridge Review*, Nov. 26, 1904, Supplement).

² R. R. Marett, *Anthropology* (1912), p. 214, observes that very few primitive societies which have been "civilized" (as J. S. Mill termed it) at the hands of the white man are not on the down grade. On the result of the introduction of ideas of "liberty" among the natives of Palestine, see Prof. Macalister, *A History of Civilization in Palestine* (1912), pp. 127 sqq.; and for an interesting document on the influence of Christianity upon Fiji, see "A Native Fijian on the Decline of his Race" in the *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1912, pp. 85-98.

The need for the "reconstruction" of religion is recognized.—There have naturally been periods of transition before now, but they neither extended over so large an area, nor concerned so many classes, types, and races of men. It is necessary to recognize the universal character of this transitional period, because in the great religions of to-day—and not in Christianity alone—there are movements confident, sympathetic, and thoroughly awake to the disturbing features of the age. Stimulated by the present conditions of thought, men are striving to reinterpret and reconstruct their religion, but it is obvious that unless they have in view the diverse needs of all those to whom they appeal, the results can scarcely have any lasting success. The reconstruction must not be merely for the philosopher, or for the liberal theologian, or for the scholar, or for those who represent specialized or departmental interests. The religion that appeals only to a group, whether local or national, or to a particular group of intellects, would, in an age of general unrest, find itself ousted by one that had a more comprehensive appeal, and one of the aims of the scientific Study of Religions is to endeavour to determine by the "comparative method" the fundamental features of religion as we find it in history.¹ Apart from these movements within current religions, we have, on the one hand, a strong tendency to positivism, materialism, or naturalism, and an indifference or hostility to all that is commonly connected with religion (whether supernaturalistic or not), while on the other, we see civilized men finding an outlet in particular forms of belief (Christian Science, theosophy, pantheism, and mysticism), in rarer and less public and esoteric forms of cult, and in a recrudescence of faith in charms, mascots and other non-rational sorts of superstition. Obviously, therefore, while certain types of intellect can

¹ This of course raises the question of a fundamental *psychical* relationship among all types and varieties of mankind.

detach themselves from the current religion, others show clearly enough that when the religion in its inherited form is unsatisfying, there is yet a gap in human nature which must be filled. It is futile to cry Peace! when there is no peace, and the features which have been rapidly summarized are not to be ignored, if only for the fact that they throw valuable light upon diversity of attitude towards religion especially in periods of transition or change.

The Study of Religions is one of the many efforts to examine fundamentals.—Thus, the Study of Religions takes its place among the modern efforts to probe down and examine fundamentals. The bases of the social order are being laid bare—and not always with a gentle hand; the profoundest convictions are being dissected—and not always with sympathy; there is the keenest introspection—but not always with modesty, restraint, and self-control. Man is learning to know himself more completely, and others are forcing themselves upon his notice. The severest criticism is being directed freely and outspokenly against that to which the individual happens to find himself opposed at the moment. Man is applying the “comparative method” to his environment. A new consciousness or a new era in consciousness would seem to be coming into being,—perhaps not devoid of the usual faults of self-consciousness. Probably no one who has endeavoured to estimate existing conditions in the light of past history will doubt that the collective tendencies are such that they are most momentous for the future of the race, and that they cannot continue to co-exist indefinitely. This being so, it is to be noticed that here, too, it is possible to find two opposing views. There are tendencies in life and thought which in certain respects are so different from those that have hitherto arisen that one can scarcely conceive their permanence unless some entirely new change of outlook makes its

appearance. It is possible, to judge from recent literature, to entertain the most pessimistic expectations and to view as a not improbable event the downfall of the white man's civilization. On the other hand, it has also been possible to view the situation with confidence and optimism, and to anticipate an age more completely beneficial to mankind as a whole than any that has passed. Both the pessimism and the optimism are genuine.

Hence the study cannot ignore present conditions.—The keenly-felt recognition that all is not as it should or might be, the mingled pessimism and optimism, and the strenuous endeavours of active minds to criticize and amend conditions—often, indeed, to put somebody else's house in order—combine to present a complex of modern life and thought which must affect any treatment of the subject that is not professedly antiquarian. Indeed, to approach the subject from any one particular standpoint would be futile, seeing that opposed standpoints are held by men as sincere and as well-meaning as those with whom one happens to agree. It goes without saying that if men take diametrically-opposed attitudes to important questions there must be a certain amount of unnecessary error or misunderstanding which can be discovered and eliminated. Even if a man of average ability holds a position which is most demonstrably wrong, the fact that it appeals to him is instructive for the psychological consideration of types of attitude to the profoundest matters. By judicious selection of evidence and by skilful argument it is easy, as we see in all controversy, to "prove" that some position is fundamentally erroneous; but it is more important to understand why such a position was ever adopted. The history of religions would indeed be unworthy of attention if we were to remain satisfied with the complacent belief that a certain proportion of mankind had been endowed with intellects incapable of reasoning aright, and that only

their blindness, stupidity, or naughtiness prevent them from adopting our standpoint!

Indeed, the present conditions assist the study.—It is one of the advantages of this age that we are forced to realize that earnest movements, however misguided or dangerous they may appear to their opponents, are the outcome of deeply-felt convictions, and can be understood only by looking below the surface, by endeavouring to diagnose them, and by the effort to determine what makes them a reality to their followers.¹ If there were any inclination for research to become superficial, the phenomena of this age are enough to show that superficial estimates are futile, if not absolutely dangerous. The complexity and intricacy of modern life favour superficiality, but the problems demand a research that is neither time-serving nor promiscuous, and that does not seek to justify a foregone conclusion. In noticing how readily people take different attitudes towards any serious question, we are gaining valuable evidence for varieties of thought, and this at least enables us to find a sounder attitude for understanding other varieties in far-off or ancient lands. In learning to understand the one, we understand the other, and in understanding either or both we are learning to understand ourselves, the difference between ourselves and others, between our higher and our lower selves. Gradually we are obliged to escape any mechanical, static, and lifeless way of handling the data of thought.

They emphasize the “dynamic” and “evolutionary” points of view.—Divergent attitudes may no doubt be accounted for by difference of temperament, experience, and environment; the attitude we take to any question is influenced by the past history of our own

¹ The open-minded historian can readily find to-day in civilized lands people and events that enable him to understand other people and events of the past that are superficially different, but psychologically identical or similar.

life-development. But it is by no means the case that this attitude was precisely the same five, ten, or twenty years ago. Nor can we say it will be unchanged five, ten, or twenty years hence—the whole history of experience forbids us to look upon the position of any individual at any given time as necessarily final. We may think that ours to-day is superior to an earlier one, but we cannot reproduce the latter in all the significance that it once had for us. We may be so content with our position that we cannot intelligently conceive a better one, and if we could do so, we could not clothe it in all the fulness that our present one has. This is a matter of the psychical evolution of the individual, and when once we realize it, we observe that we have to deal with pieces of evidence from the minds of an enormous number of individuals each at some point of his or her development. Two important points at once emerge. First, our evidence comes from individuals at a certain stage of mental growth (p. 19, n. 1), it does not necessarily represent their final attitude. But if we are influenced at each stage by our stock of experience, what is our final attitude? The development of consciousness in the individual, therefore, from infancy onward, cannot be ignored, and if, thanks to modern research, something is known of the lengthy evolution of consciousness in the organic world it would be mere one-sidedness to ignore the question of the consciousness of the individual after his death. True, we may be entirely ignorant of what becomes of it, but our ignorance is no excuse for dismissing the subject. The psychical evolution or development of the individual and of mankind cannot be left unheeded by our study, the more especially since the recognition of the growth of the individual plays some part in the religions of the world.¹

¹ The word "consciousness" is here used in a wide sense to cover the whole *psychical* aspect of man as distinct from the *physical*. Man may be "conscious" of phenomena, but for present purposes the word

They also emphasize the similarity underlying the differences. — As regards the second point, the evidence for religion really consists of fragments of a variety of imperfect stages of mental growth.¹ Yet, if we consider human consciousness, the inconceivable number of forms of thought as expressed in behaviour, language, and writing, and the enormous variation of which man is quite capable, is it or is it not remarkable that any attempt should be made to investigate, compare, and classify such results as are accessible? There is an evident similarity of beliefs and practices in spite of the equally noteworthy differences. There is a keen struggle for existence in the world of thought, as in Nature, and the fact that there is coherence and stability in the individual and in fields of research points to something which tends to weed out, consciously or unconsciously, data which would otherwise cause excessive differentiation and arrest progress. In life and in thought we are always dismissing certain ideas, or consciously and unconsciously going along one direction to the exclusion of other possible directions. If on each and every occasion we were to stop and deliberate, we should not be where we are now, and knowledge could not advance. The fact that, despite the possibility of enormous variation in thought, studies in the world of thought can be pursued

is used to include the "sub-conscious" or the "super-conscious," in fact all that which enters into his psychical life, whether consciously or not. Further, the word is extended to all living things that show an ability to react, to respond to stimuli, and to adapt themselves to their environment. In some enquiries, precision of terminology may obscure difficulties and beg questions; and the study of religions cannot, or rather should not, commence with preliminary fixed views of the meaning of "consciousness," "instinct," "intelligence," etc. This looseness of the term—mainly to avoid presuppositions that might prejudice enquiry—is provisional and for present purposes only.

¹ For example, prayers, ritual, hymns, spells, practices—all these represent the beliefs or the behaviour of some individual or individuals at some stage or stages of their life-history. This is to be emphasized in order to indicate the significance of *both* the resemblances among men *and* the differences.

at all and that thought is found to be orderly and along relatively few lines, brings us to realize a factor of which we are scarcely aware—the process of implicit selection. When we consciously select or deliberate, we choose rightly or wrongly as the case may be, but in our early years, and, indeed, to a very great extent at all times, we are not aware of this process (see pp. 150 *sqq.*).

The study concerns the profounder side of man.—Step by step the study leads to the mysteries of consciousness, to mental activity manifesting itself in forms which have been profoundly important in past history—the development of which marks the thought of this age, the genetic sequels of which will shape the age that follows. The study introduces us to the intangible, unknown, and somewhat mysterious side of our lives. It is part of the study of Man, but is confined as far as is practicable to all that is incorporated under the vague term “religion,” or that serves to explain its forms. No longer dealing merely with the bizarre, the quaint, and the irrational, it leads us to the peculiarly delicate study of the profounder side of the consciousness. It has laid its hands upon the most sacred contents of men’s thought ; it has dragged them to the light of day, and has subjected them to that uncompromising criticism which only the modern age could employ and has demanded. Find the inmost, holiest, most secret thoughts, thoughts which language is often unable to express, which often are felt rather than formulated, thoughts which have become a part of our being so that they can hardly be discussed, much less eliminated, thoughts for which men have made the greatest sacrifices—and *here* is the field upon which the study has been slowly encroaching. Sometimes there will be questions which it seems wise to ignore because they are too delicate to handle ; none the less from time to time they will force themselves to the front and claim attention. Step by step the study of man has entered a realm which

once seemed too sacred for discussion. Curious eyes have been turned upon the remarkable and often irrational beliefs of peoples, but continued research is showing that we are not dealing with some specimens of a remote and barely human race, but with men of flesh and blood hardly unlike ourselves.

It links the lowest peoples with the highest.—The steps in the study of organic evolution were viewed with indifference or complacence, until suddenly man found himself affected; not less serious is the extent to which man is touched by the youthful Study of Religions and its contribution to the nature of the human consciousness. It has passed inevitably from ancient and savage and uncultured peoples to civilization, to Christianity and to other modern religions; from the crude behaviour of backward or simple folk to the loftiest spiritual experience; from the irrational and superstitious thought of the native to the thought of the most cultured of civilized men; from the superficial examination of rites, customs, and beliefs which aroused amusement, pity, or disgust to the most intimate scrutiny of the soul. Man reveals in his body the lowliness of his origin, but stands apart in the character of those psychical endowments which give him a realm of which he may be the ruler. Whatever be his place in his *physical* environment, his *psychical* environment he can make his own. It is the nature of a certain portion of this world of feelings, thoughts, and aims which concerns our study: their contents, their significance, and, what is too often overlooked, the significance of their presence. Influenced now by one line of research and now by another, stimulated now by the facts it has discovered and now by the new problems it has raised, the study has pushed its way until it has become a field for critical research beyond which one cannot conceive any further extension—the past, present, and future attitudes of man to the greatest realities of the Universe.

The study, because it is vital, must be pursued thoroughly.— If then, an excuse is ever needed for treading upon such ground, with the aid of all that one's knowledge of modern research has to offer, it is enough to say that the Study of Religions pursued freely and outspokenly in the past has reached that stage where the diverging tendencies in it and in modern thought are inimical to its progress and to religion itself. In active life compromises may no doubt be found between conflicting parties, but in the world of thought, as tendencies diverge, they allow the entrance of features which can only be described as marks of decadence. The study is of vital importance, and if some shrink from the pursuit because it involves so much that is sacred ; others will take it up, as in the past, with little or no sympathy for such feelings. It is very necessary to remember, also, that some of the most conspicuous workers who have contributed to valuable results—which, however, some people undoubtedly might regard as harmful—have been Christians and theologians. The significance of this is obvious : it will be perceived that they must not be left without successors. A vast amount of work has been done by those whose standpoint was neutral, indifferent, and even hostile to current religion ; and this only means that those whose standpoint is explicitly sympathetic to religion must not fall behind them in equipment and knowledge, in breadth of view and keenness of criticism. A burden has been handed down for those who are willing to treat the subject with the thoroughness and the impartiality that it requires.

The attitude to be adopted by the unprejudiced enquirer.—The only hope of outgrowing the current conflicting tendencies will lie in a development to a new stage, and towards this many people are consciously or unconsciously working. As thought progresses, older positions assume a new form, certain weaknesses or errors

are eliminated, and the new position or positions are accepted because their superiority is recognized. Conflict of opinion forces the advance, attitudes undergo subtle changes, and concessions are made—freely or unwillingly, unconsciously or consciously. If there is to be any simplification of existing tendencies the sequel will involve the recognition that certain current beliefs, views, conclusions, and the like, have not the precise value or meaning that is now attached to them. This enables us to see the real difference between any endeavour to justify some particular position or tendency in contrast to another, and the endeavour to find one more adequate. The former may easily become purely apologetic and obscurantist—and it is a mistake to think these attitudes are confined to religious writers,—the latter is to conduct an enquiry in accordance with the principles of research with no immediate or clearly-outlined goal in view. By an impartial attitude to conflicting tendencies one can the better consider those errors which each sees in its opponents; and consequently, whatever be the position to which one ultimately inclines, it will at least be purified of certain imperfections. It is a general enquiry, and not the attempt to support one current position as against another, that will shape these pages. Further, the Study of Religions has come to involve so much that is bound up with men's inmost convictions that it can be pursued only with a proper sense of the responsibility attaching to those that handle it. One's attitude must not be without a certain respect and reverence. The study concerns not merely the highest values of ancient or savage peoples, but those of to-day; not only types of thought and behaviour which may seem to us irrational or absurd, but those which are very closely related to our own. Yet, impartiality has its risks. The translators of the Authorised Version, in their statement to the reader, make the famous remark: "He that meddleth with men's religion in any

part meddleth with their custom, nay, with their freehold ; and though they find no content in that which they have, yet they cannot abide to hear of altering." A one-sided treatment of questions into which religion enters, will easily provoke one side ; but the effort to be fair and impartial, and to do justice to all the evidence, may arouse the resentment of both of two opposing sides. But research does not aim at existing situations, rather does it prepare for those that are impending.

A rational impartiality is needed.—In dealing with the various forms of belief and practice, therefore, one must not necessarily judge them from any particular standpoint, but must treat them as impartially as possible, and as objective data. It is frequently impossible, however, to avoid wording which implicitly or explicitly involves some judgment, and in some conspicuous cases a preliminary attitude for approaching the evidence must be found. An absolutely objective standpoint is out of the question when the data would be meaningless without some interpretation involving a judgment, nor can we so divest ourselves as to give them any meaning which is contrary to our experience. The truly impartial man is not he who concedes in deference to a few that the world may have been created in a week about 6000 years ago, but one who allows that any intelligent individuals who are firmly convinced of this represent a type of mind which is as worthy of consideration as other types. To be impartial, we should not consider that those who believe in the existence of fairies or demons lie outside rational enquiry, rather should we recognize that they are as important for the study of religion as are those who are at no pains to hide their contempt for all that with which they have no sympathy. Our wider standpoint must take in and do justice to both types.

As also a rational sympathy.—One-sidedness and arbitrariness can be avoided to a considerable extent by

proper attention to alternative interpretations or to conflicting positions, and by endeavouring to understand them. A sympathy must be cultivated for forms of thought often alien from our own, but they must be viewed with unceasing criticism. The French philosopher Littré has admirably and aptly set forth the spirit of the enquirer: "It is necessary," he says, "that the heart should become ancient among the ancient things, and the fulness of history only reveals itself to him who descends, thus prepared, into the past: but it is necessary that the mind should remain modern and never forget that there is for it no other faith than the scientific faith." To put it more generally, in dealing with minds other than one's own, one must attempt to enter into them with sympathy, and at the same time maintain that intellectual detachment which is needed for estimating them. This is analogous to the relationship between the parent and the child, when the parent enters as fully as he can into the feelings and thoughts of the child, but still preserves all that makes the difference between his own consciousness when he was a child and the stage he has now reached. We have to deal with what may be called "psychical levels," that is to say, with minds which for some reason we consider "superior" or "inferior." The metaphor may be applied to the difference between the teacher and the class, the parent and his child, the lover and his mistress, the townsman and the villager, the poet and the peasant, every man and his neighbour or his political rival—everywhere where some *psychical* superiority or inferiority is explicitly or implicitly recognized. Now this difference is universally recognized, consciously or unconsciously, as regards some particular which, as we often think, is fundamental; and the great problems of life and thought invariably involve questions of psychical superiority or inferiority. Our instinctive tendency is adequately expressed by the term "psychical level(s)," but

it must be clearly understood that our phraseology is purely metaphorical, and that it is impossible to argue that the "superiority" or "inferiority" is absolute (p. 143, n. 2).

The sympathy must be checked by criticism.—The question of the relationship of one psychical level to another underlies the psychological study of religion from beginning to end. Now, to understand thoughts and ideas as they appeal to other minds is to tend to be of their way of thinking; and if we hold a detached position, and have no firm principles, a sympathetic attitude could lead us to accept their thoughts and ideas as real and true for ourselves. The more we see how real is the thought of some other, the easier to take it as true for ourselves and for all time. In so doing we may weaken that exercise of criticism which is essential. Again, the detached position, when carried to excess, may blind us to the significance of other forms of thought, and thus we may readily misunderstand data which are as much wrapped up in the whole being of ancient or savage peoples as our profoundest realities are in us. We see the letter—the outward expression—but not the spirit. The detached position can also be harmful in that by taking the study away from real life and by forgetting that we are dealing with men of flesh and blood we build up in ourselves a psychical environment—a world of thought—which may make us get out of touch with the thought of the everyday environment. The ultra-impartial mind that drifts away from its values, that has not firm elementary principles, may run the risk of passing from an excessive and hyper-critical attitude to one that is really non-critical. The correct balance of sympathy and critical detachment each enquirer has to find as best he can; this is his contribution to the development of thought, a development which is the indispensable supplement to the study of the evolution of the organic world.

Risk of error is lessened by convergence of results.

—The study depends for its progress upon the most careful enquiry. Its path is strewn with pitfalls and the memory of past mistakes. Mistakes will still be made and unavoidably so, and it is therefore useful to avoid the popular fallacy which confuses Freedom of Thought with Freedom of Utterance, whether in speech or in writing. The conclusions which commend themselves to such-and-such an individual at such-and-such a date are not necessarily to be promulgated; it is not always the bounden duty of the individual of sincere convictions to express the results of the freest exercise of his intellect. Many a one who has done something to advance his study could point to the wreckage of secret and private conclusions which led up to those which he felt justified in uttering.¹ And where religion is concerned, the need for restraint is more obvious. Quite apart from the very natural desire to avoid wounding susceptibilities unnecessarily, and simply as a question of research, when numerous lines of enquiry are involved, as in the case of this study, it is wise to check results as far as possible with those that have been reached by workers in related fields, and to observe their principles and their methods.² True, the counsel is more ideal than strictly practical, but this method will serve to banish some preliminary or fundamental mistakes, even though others are left or fresh

¹ I quote from Karl Pearson, *The Grammar of Science*, i. (1911), p. 32: "No less an authority than Faraday writes: 'The world little knows how many of the thoughts and theories which have passed through the mind of a scientific investigator have been crushed in silence and secrecy by his own severe criticism and adverse examination; that in the most successful instances not a tenth of the suggestions, the hopes, the wishes, the preliminary conclusions have been realised.'" See Professor Pearson's remarks on *disciplined* thought, *ibid.* p. 31.

² It may also be added that, from the theistic point of view, the Study of Religions is the study of what people have thought of God, or, to put it otherwise, of the way in which the Deity has revealed Himself to man. From this point of view, the Study of Religions immediately concerns the relations between God and man at all ages and in all lands.

errors made to be corrected by one's successors. The fact that errors have been made in the past is a reason, not for holding the more tenaciously to one's present position, which may seem a perfectly valid one, but for observing more carefully the validity of the positions held by others. The key-note of these pages will be the insistence upon the correlation of the points of agreement and of controversy, the co-ordination of resemblances and differences, of the evidence in our favour and of that against us. In life and in thought the soundest position is that which neither ignores nor under-estimates those that oppose it. The test is not the number of facts it answers, but the way in which it deals with the facts that are brought against it, not the "majority" it can claim, but its attitude to the "minority" (see p. 118).

CHAPTER II

SOME ASPECTS OF THE EVOLUTION OF THOUGHT:
FEATURES IN THE PROGRESS OF THE COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF RELIGIONS.

The field of study.—The critical Study of Religions is a vast and unwieldy subject which is still at a very youthful stage. It depends upon other lines of investigation and ancillary studies, and it is necessarily so immediately influenced by the subjective element in the individual that in many important features there is an absence of that unanimity of opinion which is essential for its progress. In addition to this it covers an immense area, geographically and historically. Finally, the study seems to be so simple and so open to ordinary untrained enquiry, that this has been one of the causes of that conflict of tendencies which is so detrimental to its advance. It stands in urgent need of trained collaborators, but it is not easy to say how men may best be trained. We cannot deal with the higher religions unless we understand something of the lower, where thought is less complex, and we cannot deal with either unless we are prepared to use those principles which are necessary for any useful research. The study involves archaeology, sociology, history, theology, anthropology, and psychology, and more than this, it also requires the possession of a proper attitude for approaching it. The accumulation and dissemination of knowledge are often not so valuable

as the methods of handling it, and faced as we are to-day with a plethora of relevant evidence to which no single individual can expect to do justice ; it is wise to see whether we can learn how to make the best use of such as we are able to employ. If we look back we realize what wonderful advances man has made in the past with little knowledge and with tools relatively inferior to those of our age ; and the history of civilization from the days of prehistoric primitive man suggests that progress has been due less to the *quantity* of knowledge and more to its *quality* and to the *methods* employed.¹

The question of defining religion. — Now, at the outset, it is not necessary to discuss current definitions of religion. It is only too easy to frame one that would at once arouse prejudice, or that would be so psychological that it would mean nothing to the ordinary reader. When we use such words as Religion, Socialism, Democracy, and the like, the ideas associated under these labels vary according to individual ways of thinking, and it would be easy to construct a definition that would be one-sided, or biased. What is really needed is a definition applicable to past and present circumstances, and in particular one that will be valuable for the future, since no one can categorically deny that religion has a future before it. Since a definition readily tends to beg questions, it is often best left to the end of an enquiry ; and in this case the natural method is to start with ordinary views. All know what is commonly involved in the term " religion " as apart from any estimate of its value : it is a way of thinking and the expression or result of it, it is a mode or type of behaviour bound up with certain beliefs, and both behaviour and beliefs have varied widely in the past. It includes personal experiences of a peculiarly distinctive,

¹ One is well aware of that absurd pseudo-scientific notion that knowledge is quite a modern acquisition, beginning somewhere about the time of the Reformation.

private, and convincing character. All people recognize that ethics and morality are necessary, and that the relations between the individual and the rest of his group must be regulated ; but the essential difference between the religious and the non-religious attitude may be said to lie in the fact that in religion we have to take into further account experiences and beliefs touching the Supernatural, the Unseen Order, or the Power or Powers superior to man.¹

Religion concerns individuals.—We may find much that is unlovely in religion, but in the nature of the case we shall not find it in ethics ; and while ethics and ethical ideals can do without the Supernatural, this—the Supernatural—is indispensable in religion. The category of religion is, thus, something extensive and comprehensive, for it comprises the things of which we approve and their opposite, a world revealed to the senses and an unseen, the known and the unknown. Now, it is obvious that we have to consider the *individual*, and we must look upon his beliefs and behaviour, not as something external and extraneous, as we readily do when we adopt a critical

¹ The words "thought," "think," and the like are used quite generally, irrespective of the fact that analysis might sever feeling, emotion, or instinct from conceptual and intellectual processes. A preliminary differentiation might beg the issue (cf. above, p. 18, n. 1). The term "supernatural," although an awkward one, has at least a generally intelligible meaning. We have to remember that identical or similar beliefs are found attached to deities and spirits ; to animals, plants, and inanimate objects ; to objects of perception, such as an image or a semi-divine king, and to objects of conception, such as the name of such a king or the idea of a deity. The term "Supernatural" covers beliefs which implicitly or explicitly recognize something outside and above man. Everywhere groups or individuals may differ in their attitude, but everywhere they will subjectively recognize a difference—something that belongs to their realm of the supernatural or the supersensuous. In like manner, the terms "Sacred," "Holy," "Divine," have a very real meaning for groups or individuals, but mere objective comparison shows that we can hardly make any absolute difference between what is Holy and what is not so. The terms have a subjective validity, which becomes an objective one when the convictions are shared by the group to which the individual belongs.

attitude, but as something bound up with his way of thinking. From our detached standpoint we can compare, analyse, and interpret the data, but it is clear that we have to try and understand *why* there are religious individuals and *why* they adopt certain beliefs and practise certain behaviour. To go outside for an illustration, whatever we may think of the behaviour, beliefs, or works of poets, artists, or lovers, a criticism that was not superficial would sooner or later have to consider the more psychological aspects. But could it understand them? For example, could one who had no poetry in his being deal adequately with the subject of poetry? Again, a man who had never been in love might doubtless contribute much to a study of this subject, and more critically perhaps than an enthusiastic lover; but he could not understand his subject so clearly as the lover, nor could he hope to demonstrate that the lover was irrational. Whatever our critic might have to say against love, he and those whose experiences were similarly limited would form a class apart from those who had experienced it, although the latter might be perfectly ready to agree that much harm and evil had often been done in the name of love. The question of love, then, would necessarily be regarded differently by individuals of these classes, and this difference between the external categorical object "love" and any individual's body of thoughts, ideas, and feelings concerning it, is analogous to that between the objective and the subjective or individualistic aspects of religion.

There is a subjective test of all that is profound.

—Any one who is keenly interested in politics is aware that there is a subtle difference between Politics—with a large P—and *his* politics. It is not dissimilar in religion. Consequently when any reference is made to religion, it is often necessary to ask whether we are dealing with some objective body of thought and its various manifestations—beliefs and practices—or whether it is something

which immediately concerns the consciousness of the individual.¹ Now, often in conversation or discussion a point is reached where we feel an immediate difference within ourselves. Men will draw the line differently, but there is a part of the consciousness which contains many profound values, whether in religion, politics, relationships, or what not. Our psychical environment, our world of thought, our realm of consciousness—or whatever name we may give it—contains a state or phase or section which seems to be more truly part of ourselves. Here we more keenly resent criticism, unsympathetic remarks, or heedless conversation ; it is no longer merely a question of ideas, but of things which are very near to us, part of our structure or constitution as it were, things that are not solely assimilated knowledge, not solely feeling, but a fusion of the two that has grown up in us and is capable of further growth. It is immaterial for the present that what is commonly called religion may not necessarily be found here ; the main point is to emphasize the presence of this phase of the consciousness, it is of fundamental importance for the study of religion.

Religion and the consciousness.—We may regard religion as a body of beliefs and practices which control or shape or influence a certain portion of human thought and activity—religion, as part of the great world of human thought and activity appearing in a wonderful variety of forms in history. Or we may regard religion as bound up with the profounder side of the consciousness, and dependent upon the mental, spiritual, or psychical development of the individual, as distinct from his physical growth. In no case must we confine ourselves to any narrow definition of religion, since in human history it has comprised much that is now often regarded as quite

¹ The crude rationalistic attacks upon religion often deal with some abstract conception which hardly corresponds to religion as we find it in ordinary life or among ordinary religious individuals.

distinct, and, in the individual consciousness, there may be profound conceptions and noble aims without the recognition of religion in the commonly accepted sense of the word. Now, the method of criticism that can be employed in an impartial study of the objective data presented by beliefs and behaviour cannot be so readily extended to that more mysterious and more unknown side of the consciousness which, it will doubtless be agreed, is the most effective part of the individual. This may appear to take away from the clearness of the subject, to remove the possibility of scientific treatment. On the other hand, it is obvious that although little may be known of the whole consciousness of the individual, it would be an unscientific procedure to leave it out of the question. Our subject, therefore, cannot ultimately ignore anything that throws light upon the development of consciousness in the individual and in the race.

Development of thought in history.—As far back as we have good documentary evidence—that is, four to five thousand years ago—we find man at a wonderfully high level of thought, whereas at the present day there are savages so low in the scale that between them and us there appears to be a gulf that cannot be bridged. The ancient evidence comes from Babylonia and Egypt, lands which are historically linked with our own culture and civilization. If it were necessary to trace back the steps and demonstrate the links, one would notice our indebtedness to Rome and Greece and the lands of the Bible, and the influence exerted by Babylonia, Egypt, Asia Minor and the Aegean Isles. There is a fairly clear line of connexion, which is restricted geographically and historically, in that we may ignore such lands as India, China, Japan, etc. When we look back upon the past we may feel that there has been an ascent, but an unprejudiced and deeper study of the conditions in the ancient civilizations may tempt us to ask whether there has really been an advance,

wherein precisely it consists, and why, repeatedly, so much has had to be done over again. If there has been an evolution of thought in human history, it is difficult to determine precisely what has evolved during the four or five millennia that separate us from, let us say, Babylonian law with its penalties for jerry-building and for breach of promise, or Egyptian ethics, as illustrated by the record of one who declared, "I gave bread to the hungry and clothing to the naked, never did I judge two brothers so that a son was deprived of his paternal possessions."¹ That we are superior to the savage is not so very remarkable when we consider the highly developed culture and civilization presented to us by our environment. But the lowest and most rudimentary of cults have essential points of resemblance with the highest religions. Hence, the differences we see must not obscure the resemblances, and our ideas of evolution will be imperfect unless they pay heed both to the persistence of underlying similar features everywhere, and the decay and overthrow of past civilizations.

The different orders of development.—When, on the other hand, we deal with the evolution of the individual, we are at once concerned with the environment into which each is born. There seems little reason to suppose that the normal savage child is intellectually much inferior to the young child of white civilized parents. The difference appears as each grows and comes under the influence of the mentality of the social group in which it finds itself, and it is this relationship between the individual and the environment that is all-important for the study of religion. The evolution of the environment or of a particular area or people is not to be confused with that of the individuals of which it is composed or with that

¹ The references are to the Babylonian code of Hammurabi and an Egyptian funereal inscription (Breasted, *Ancient Records: Egypt*, i. § 357).

of man throughout history. Children born to-day in a savage tribe of Australia, in a native family in Palestine, or in an ordinary English home, will start each at a very rudimentary stage in the development of the consciousness, but the environments will be entirely different. The child in the course of a psychical development, in some essential features identical with that of all children, will be continuously influenced by the results of the development of life and thought in his particular environment. Everywhere we have to consider the threefold development : that of every man, that of the environment into which he is born, and that vaster development of the total world of thought by which his environment may have been influenced. With this in mind we may now turn to some of the features in the progress of the Comparative Study of Religions, the factors that have brought it to its present position, and its place in modern research. If we may look upon the study as a great " body " of data, hypotheses, ideas, conclusions and so forth, it is the development of this " body " that we have to consider. But the paragraphs that follow do not pretend to give any adequate account of this ; attention will be directed more especially to points of interest for the subject of these pages. It is important to notice some features in the movement of deliberate intellectual effort, some of the factors that make for success or for failure in the progress of a study. The Study of Religions deals so essentially with forms and movements of thought that when we handle the history of a study, or of any other definite " body," we may look out for evidence that bears upon the dynamic aspects of thought and that prepares us for some of the enquiries that will be undertaken later.

Rise of the Comparative Study of Religions.—In ancient times writers not infrequently paid attention to

the beliefs and customs of other peoples, and Herodotus, the father of history, has also been called "the first anthropologist of religion." But an objective interest in alien modes and expressions of thought, and the power of looking at them in a detached manner, are not ordinary gifts; they betoken an intelligent curiosity and a freedom from prejudice, both of which are indispensable to research. They are hardly to be found in those writers who furnish evidence for beliefs only to condemn them, and who are apt to give a colouring to their data which the enquirer must endeavour to remove. The early Church Fathers, who perceived the resemblances between Christianity and Paganism, may be cited as early exponents of the comparative method, but many centuries elapsed before any systematic work was undertaken. Not until the Renaissance were the three conditions favourable: access to an adequate amount of evidence, a keen interest in it, and a general state of thought that enabled one to handle the evidence critically and sympathetically. For this new era the preceding ages had been preparing.

The so-called "Revival" of Learning.—At this juncture we may notice an important fact bearing on the evolution of thought. If we are concerned with the evolution of a special subject—*e.g.* philosophy, medicine, natural science—and if we consider the advances which had been made in ancient Greece, it will seem that there had been a set-back until the Revival of Learning and the Renaissance. This is true if we consider so abstract a thing as a subject of research. But research depends on individuals and their environment, and consequently one must not ignore the actual history of Western Europe. With the rise of freer methods of enquiry in Europe we do not find that such subjects as these mentioned started from the point which had previously been reached in Greece; indeed the old Greek conception of a continual flow in Nature had

to await the age of Darwin before it became established. What we actually find is that the subjects blossom forth upon another soil, in a new environment which had taken centuries to mature. The old civilizations of Greece and Rome had fallen, peoples in Western Europe had emerged from a state of semi-barbarism, and new conditions had to grow up before the necessary stage was reached. To confuse the evolution of Western Europe with that of certain branches of research is to confuse the historical development of a busy area with that of certain parts of the more abstract world of thought. We may realize the confusion more clearly if we contrast the course of the development leading up to modern Christianity with the actual history of the lands of the Bible before, during, and after the period when its contents were taking shape. The development of Christianity is that of certain fundamental beliefs, convictions, ideals, and practices among Christians, but it involves areas which have in some cases "advanced," in others "retrograded." Western Europe passed through conditions of thought historically distinct from those which led in ancient Greece to that height of learning and culture which must always arouse our admiration. Why did not these studies continue and develop in Greece? Before we talk of any "arrest" or "set-back" or "retrogression" in the Middle Ages, we must obviously ask what impeded their progress in ancient Greece. Was it not the failure of individuals to carry them onward? *Our* European environment was a young and growing area upon which flourished such learning as seemed profitable, desirable, and useful; that in Greece was a more mature environment, and our intellectual difficulties are in very large measure due to the fact that we have inherited a pre-Copernican system of thought which is incompatible with that which has been and is still being demanded by the progress of knowledge.

The first steps.—As the growing environment in

Western Europe widened its interests and extended into the classical and oriental fields, there was an excellent opportunity for the comparison of religions. But the opening up of these fields did not necessarily find men ready and anxious to study the new knowledge for its own sake; the interests were mainly utilitarian—from current points of view. Thus, the rise of the study of Hebrew and other oriental languages in the early part of the fifteenth century has been traced to the influence exercised by mysticism, especially by the Jewish Kabbalah, whose theosophical system seemed to offer a powerful auxiliary to the cause of Christianity.¹ The first significant landmark was established by a Cambridge divine, Dr. John Spencer, Master of Corpus Christi College, in the latter half of the seventeenth century. He was the author of a Latin work on the ritual laws of the Hebrews which, it has been stated, “may justly be said to have laid the foundations of the science of Comparative Religion.” This is the opinion of one of the most conspicuous and most successful labourers in this field, if not perhaps the chief founder of the modern phase of the study.² Spencer’s work had of course certain defects which were unavoidable considering the age when it was written, but it remained the most important book on Hebrew religious antiquities and should have proved influential. Yet, although time has shown that this judicious enquirer proceeded upon the right lines, his work was too much ignored, notwithstanding the fact that some advance had already been made in the criticism of the Old Testament—and that by other divines—and that there were attitudes opposed to religion and dogma which might have found support for themselves in Spencer’s book, even as such attitudes at the present day have

¹ *Ency. Brit.* art. “Kabbalah” (vol. xv. p. 622 seq.) and “Reuchlin” (vol. xxiii. p. 205).

² William Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, p. vi. Cf. also A. S. Peake, *The Bible* (1913), p. 325 seq.

found support in the work of theological critics. But Spencer was too much ahead of his age, studies had not reached the stage where the value of his work could be perceived; not dogmatic prejudice, or obscurantism, or disinclination for truth, but simply the existing state of the thought of the environment prevented him from being the founder of a study which had to wait more than a century before the time was ripe. If we wish to avoid imperfect ideas of the movement of thought, religious or otherwise, such instructive features as these must be carefully observed. Parallels could easily be found. Although the study of Greek was eagerly taken up at the so-called Revival of Learning, there are blots in the Authorised Version of the New Testament, due to ignorance on the part of the translators of some quite elementary principles of Greek syntax.¹ Again, although Mendelism has given a new turn to biological research since 1900, Mendel had published an account of his experiments in 1865; and although writers of the cruder rationalistic sort may deplore the obscurantism of their opponents, they often do not betray any eagerness to entertain ideas and views which would compel a reconsideration of their own position. No one, perhaps, is intentionally obscurantist, but every one has to undergo some psychological development before he is ripe enough to appreciate that which his environment has to offer him, or that which would be for the benefit of his environment.

Interest in folk-lore.—Now, apart from Spencer's work, individuals were meanwhile turning to folk-lore, the traditional beliefs and customs of the uncultured classes in Christendom. Though largely dilettante and casual, this interest in quaint and strange aspects of humanity and intelligent curiosity in what was obviously

¹ The late Professor S. R. Driver, *The Higher Criticism* (1905), p. 19, refers for evidence to Lightfoot, *On a Fresh Revision of the Eng. N.T.* (1871).

of no immediate value paved the way for results the significance of which was speedily recognized. It has not infrequently happened that satire and ridicule have been poured upon enterprises the utility of which has not been apparent, the triviality of which seemed to set them apart from serious attention. The whole history of research emphasizes the fact that there is nothing too trivial for methodical investigation, and that to hinder, decry, or despise an enquiry because it does not appear to have any practical value is to reveal one's own limitations and to ignore the origin of some of our most beneficial acquisitions.¹ It was not long before students came to recognize the importance of folk-lore, in its bearing both upon civilized thought and custom and upon the various forms of savage belief, where close resemblances were repeatedly found, and a definite phase may be said to have been marked by the brothers Grimm who, in the early part of the nineteenth century, made the first real effort to deal methodically with oral and written folk-tradition.²

Acquisition of other material. The necessity of **criticism.**—Meanwhile, evangelizing zeal in distant lands was adding to the material, and from time to time missionaries, traders, officials, and travellers have rendered admirable service by recording their observations. And especially as they have learned the sort of material that was most needed have they been invaluable in bringing a more trained attention to bear. The "arm-chair critic," nevertheless, has found himself obliged to criticize their evidence, because such observers have not infrequently been so much under the influence of particular scientific,

¹ See J. A. Thomson, *Introduction to Science*, chap. viii. (on the utility of science).

² It is not necessary to deal with the growth of the study of folk-lore, and the reader may be referred for further information to the article by Mr. N. W. Thomas in the *Ency. Brit.*, 11th ed., vol. x. p. 601 *seq.*

religious, or philosophical views, that they have often—quite unconsciously—given an erroneous colouring to their observations. The quality of the religion of the savage has now been under-estimated, and now it has been over-estimated. More has often been read into it than was really justified, or it has been misjudged from its external form. Besides this, it has been forgotten that the savage, like us, is often disinclined to lay bare his soul and reveal his profoundest thoughts. Observers, also, have sometimes viewed the evidence in the light of particular theories of the comparative study of religions, and such terms as animism, fetishism, totemism, ancestor worship, matriarchy, and others, have been used in a way that has sometimes caused confusion. The naïve observer, or one who manifests an obvious bias, is in many respects an easier source than one who has employed a criticism of his own, and who views things from a complex intellectual attitude which we have first to understand and then to discount. Those observers who have been most valuable have combined criticism with a sympathetic understanding of the native, and by the fulness of their reports they have enabled students not only to test their own evidence but also to gain a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the environment, through which alone the data of religion can best be understood.¹

The value of anthropology and the “arm-chair” critic.—The debt which the Study of Religions owes to those who work in other lands is repaid as the practical value of anthropology—to use the widest term—becomes more generally recognized. The result is to give a greater human interest, a more intelligent sympathy based upon knowledge, and a clearer understanding of the significance

¹ A very definite event which has been extraordinarily stimulating in the critical study of social-religious material was the publication of the *Native Tribes of Central Australia* in 1899 by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen. This was supplemented in 1904 by their *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*.

and reality of the thought of the people with whom one is in contact. In a word, it enables a man to come into closer touch with the individuals among whom his work lies, and to combine discrimination with sympathy. At the same time, in learning to know other people better a man is improving his powers of intelligent research. All this bears upon the problem of the relationship between two "psychical levels"—the problem which continually meets us in our study, which lies at the bottom of all efforts to influence and instruct, and which forces itself upon our notice in an age of unrest.¹ The foregoing is instructive, also, for the issue between the man who sees natives as they really are, and the stay-at-home "arm-chair" critic. It does not necessarily follow that the man on the spot has the sounder knowledge of the field. Acquaintance with the lands of the Bible has been asserted by some to be essential for the best criticism of the Old Testament, but it has been found that those who have lived in the nearer East differ as radically as the stay-at-home scholars touching the leading conclusions of criticism. Acquaintance with alien life and thought prevents certain types of erroneous, abstract judgment, but not all, and the two classes of workers are mutually corrective. But as for those who are fated to be the arm-chair critics, without the privilege of any first-hand knowledge, they can check their investigations none the less by endeavouring to understand the varieties of human nature around them. If it may be said, on the one hand, that the study of religions requires that a man be able to comprehend more sympathetically and with greater insight psychical levels different from his own, he does not necessarily need an acquaintance with types of thought in savage lands. The other levels which he comes across in his own town and country are quite sufficient. If he cannot in some measure understand the varieties in his own civilization,

¹ See above, p. 25, on "psychical levels."

he can scarcely expect to be successful when he has to do with other levels abroad, especially when, as is often the case, the evidence is extremely fragmentary and the thought seems to differ very markedly from his own. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that the wider, more sympathetic, and more discriminating attitude is doubly valuable—it both adds to one's own knowledge of other attitudes and it gives one a clearer knowledge of one's own.¹

The influence of philosophy.—Now, as the facts were being collected from all parts of the earth, two fundamental studies prepared the way for handling them. The progress of philosophy was shaping that mental outlook from which to view the evidence, and in turn was being influenced by the new accumulation of data.² Consciously or unconsciously philosophy contributes so much to our ordinary outlook that it is a wise plan to avoid as far as possible any comprehensive system that tends to give us a ready-made framework into which to

¹ If it be urged that the savage is psychologically quite different from the civilized man, it should be noticed that there are such striking differences among the several members of every ordinary community or society that it could be urged that all men everywhere were psychologically different. Our argument would be based upon the *differences* we discover. On the other hand, our conclusion would be absurd, it would be contrary to all the evidence for the oneness of mankind, and the existence of such studies as anthropology and psychology is due to the fact that everywhere there are some profound *resemblances*. The sounder method, therefore, is to start with the recognition of a certain psychical similarity, oneness, and resemblance, and to proceed thence to estimate the admittedly profound differences. The key to progress lies in the method of approach—in the preliminary recognition that there are certain resemblances among all men.

² The philosophy that aims at some completeness must naturally be in touch with the movements in the comparative study of religions; it is self-evident that no synthesis can be considered scientifically adequate unless it pays account to the work done by "specialists" in all the relevant departments of knowledge covered by the synthesis. Hence a scientific philosophy that ignored the philosophy of religion would be imperfect; it might satisfy sundry individuals, but it could not satisfy an environment containing those to whom religion and the

fit our data. A twofold error is often made: (a) Sometimes when we adopt an idea—*e.g.* “creative evolution”—from a current philosophy or system of ideas, we often adopt a great deal more than we ought or need; (b) and sometimes when we see such an idea it will be assumed that the writer is necessarily an adherent of some particular system where we have found it to recur. In the former case, in adopting a part, we adopt some of the whole in which it happens to be found; in the latter, we jump from the part to the whole, and assume that the part presupposes the particular whole with which we are acquainted.¹ There are those who condemn certain aspects of Old Testament criticism and ascribe them to the influence of the philosopher Hegel, yet not only is this inexact, they themselves in objecting to the alleged influence of one philosophy betray their adherence to another. Sooner or later we may be influenced by some positive philosophical outlook, but in so far as philosophy involves a synthesis of the results of diverse studies it is wise to allow for the present imperfections of knowledge, and especially so when any system involves *a priori* theories of the evolution of thought.

The criticism of philosophy.—In so far as philosophy is affected by or affects the problem of the growth of consciousness in the individual and in mankind, it is necessary to see that justice is done to such evidence as is furnished by our study. As an illustration one may note the problem of the relationship between our impressions of the external world and the external things themselves. It has been suggested that our impressions due to our

philosophy of religion continued to appeal. So also a philosophy that ignored the work of scientific research would be imperfect.

¹ In point of fact, the idea of “creative evolution” (or the like) can be viewed apart from the more or less systematized bodies of ideas in which different writers will present it, and therefore could reappear in some fresh system freed from the objections now brought against any current system.

senses are very much like those which a telephone clerk would have, boxed up in a telephone-exchange, and gaining all knowledge of the external world through the messages which came along his wires.¹ But this is valueless, because, apart from other reasons, we simply cannot adequately conceive the results of such a situation; certain knowledge has become so much a part of ourselves that we cannot divest ourselves of it and look at things otherwise. No one can conceive what impression an object would make upon one whose mind was a *tabula rasa*.² On the other hand, in the Comparative Study of Religions we do actually find individuals, reasonable and intelligent, with a stock of knowledge far inferior to our own, with forms of thought widely different from ours, and they furnish examples of ways of looking at things which, even if we cannot project ourselves into their minds, are yet *bona fide* and effective. For example, a man may justly be annoyed if some one takes away his hat and mutilates it, but what are we to make of the savage when he believes that an injury done to some portion of his clothing, even at a distance, will injure him, or that if he hangs it up in some sacred locality he himself will undoubtedly be benefited? Here is an attitude to external things which must surely enter into every estimate of perceptions and conceptions.

The value of psychology.—This brings us to the second fundamental study, Psychology, the study of

¹ See G. S. Fullerton, *Introduction to Philosophy* (New York, 1906), p. 38 *seq.*, and his criticism of Karl Pearson's *Grammar of Science*, 3rd ed., p. 60 *seq.* Another suggestion, similar to Professor Pearson's and open to similar criticisms, may be read in Mr. H. S. R. Elliot's *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson* (1912), p. 185 *seq.*

² What idea *could* the clerk, or any one else, have of his customers if he had never seen a customer or any one like a customer? On the other hand, the reader may ascertain for himself how an educated individual will proceed to describe any new conjuring trick which has completely mystified him.

consciousness and of the mental processes as displayed in thought and behaviour. While every man has some sort of co-ordination or systematization of ideas—and the more complete it is, the more it becomes a “ philosophy ”—in psychology we deal with the mind and the mental processes, whether the individual be a philosopher or a peasant, a scholar or a savage, a mystic or an agnostic. However vital our general outlook or attitude may be, it is more vital to investigate its development ; for though our outlook actuates our whole life *to-day*, it is neither stationary, nor can it be severed from the development of thought in ourselves or in our environment. Psychology, in fact, strikes at some of our treasured prejudices. It links man with the lower orders—the psychologist cannot make an absolute severance between man and the animals. It links the savage with the civilized, it links the distinctively religious individual with the non- or the anti-religious, and, finally, it links every part of the consciousness with the whole in such a way that the religious and non-religious aspects of any individual cannot be regarded as isolated one from the other.¹

The psychology of the savage.—It is very questionable whether the savage can be said to differ psychologically from the civilized man.² Certainly the savage is often a gentleman, and the inhabitant of civilized lands will sometimes act not unlike the savage. The main psychological differences appear to rest upon difference of knowledge, different theories of the world, and differences of temperament. It has been said of the savage that “ instead of explaining the unity of the whole by the combination and interaction of the parts, he explains the combination and interaction of the parts by the unity of

¹ Reference may be made to Irving King, *The Development of Religion : A Study in Anthropology and Social Psychology* (1910), and James H. Leuba, *A Psychological Study of Religion : Its Origin, Function, and Future* (1912).

² See above, p. 44, n. 1.

the whole.”¹ This view is presumably based upon those cases where the savage sees an association which, as our superior knowledge shows us, is irrelevant and casual. But the fact is that the savage errs only in those respects where we have advanced ; and when he confuses “ objective ” with “ subjective ” necessity he sees a causation and a control evidently due to his interconnexion of ideas. To some people it seems perfectly natural to suppose that by closing public-houses we shall put down the drink-traffic ! Do away with cards and horses, and there would be no gambling ! So long as social, political, economical, and other ideals and practices are based upon any interconnexion of ideas, so long are we psychologically akin to the savage, who is dubbed irrational only where we have progressed beyond him. Time and criticism justify some of our ideas, and overturn others. We ourselves explain parts by the unity of the whole ; hence, according to our standpoint—religious or non-religious—the Universe is explained in terms that do or do not find a place for the supernatural. To the non- or anti-supernatural the Universe as a whole is explicable without the supernatural, but to others the whole is incomplete if it does not include those phenomena and those factors which come into the category of the supernatural. If the true scientific procedure is to explain the unity of the whole by the combination and interaction of all the parts, this means that we must include our own selves and all those whose explanation of the Universe, though it may seem irrational or unscientific, involves religious ideas of the profoundest significance for their lives. The point at issue is, What is the whole to be taken into consideration ?

¹ G. F. Stout, *A Manual of Psychology* (3rd ed., 1913), pp. 639 seq., 682 seq.

The value of the old oriental material.—The present stage of the Comparative Study of Religions may be said to be due to three main factors. The first is the rapid accumulation of material, not only from folklore and from modern lands, but especially from the ancient sources, the classical writers, and the vast stores from the nearer and the farther East. The fruits of Egyptology and Assyriology, the growing extension of the study of the "Bible lands" into Arabia, Asia Minor, and the Aegean, the interconnexion of these areas in ancient times, and their significance for the ages that followed—all this has revolutionized those earlier conceptions which had been based mainly upon the Old Testament. The real value of the vast stores of knowledge which these areas have been and still are revealing cannot yet be fully appreciated, partly because there are serious difficulties in the way of handling and of presenting them, partly because of the different attitudes of students to the Old Testament itself. None the less, apart from their immediate importance for the critical study of the three great religions—Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism—especially illuminating is the light they throw upon variations of religion and custom in history, forms of development, the vicissitudes of deities and demons, factors in the origin, growth, and decay of faiths, the relationship between orthodox and unorthodox forms of belief, the combination of lofty ethics with fanaticism or with revolting practices, the characteristics of reforms and their fate, and so forth. Enabled as we now are to extend our survey for over 4000 years, from ancient Babylonia, Egypt, and Palestine down to the present day, the lands which have played so important a part in the history of Civilization and Religion furnish us, in the vicissitudes of their history, with the means of testing some theories of the evolution of religion. The *historical* method corrects and supplements the purely *comparative* method.

Darwin and the evolution of thought.—The second great factor is the establishment of the evolutionary hypothesis. In themselves the principles of evolution are not new. The interconnexions and interrelationships of organic life, the orderliness of life, the continual change of things, each stage supplying the antecedent to its successor—these and other ideas associated with the evolutionary theory had made their appearance before Darwin. But it is through him that what had formerly been inchoate and incoherent became a sound working principle for the classification and explanation of existing facts and for the discovery of new ones. Considerable advances had been made already in research along these lines, but, thanks to Darwin and his successors, it has been possible to gain a deeper insight into Nature and to move towards more comprehensive results. Now there are many features in Darwin's work and in Darwinism which are extremely instructive for any investigation of the progress of thought in general. Especially we may notice that in one fresh and independent genius tendencies which were already in the air found an expression and a firmer basis. Opinion was ripening, but the storm Darwin aroused is enough to show how much had to be done before his ideas could become common property. He offered a theory that was along lines upon which some thinkers were already moving. But to one and all it became inevitable that they should make up their mind one way or the other. A dilemma of this sort is of the greatest assistance at certain periods in the progress of thought. It also marked the inauguration of the modern stage of Old Testament criticism.¹ The dilemma forces those concerned to range themselves on the one side or upon the other. Those who are not for the leader are against him. Meanwhile there is no third position. Thought is clarified, and the points at issue are

¹ See below, p. 58.

more closely defined. The old problems take a new form, or are sometimes partially suspended for a time : this is at once an advantage and a disadvantage.

The part played by the individual.—When we have prominent individuals inaugurating some new stage in the history of research, it is always interesting to notice the circumstances and to compare them with the part played by great men in introducing some new era in religion. Thus, one may notice the relationship between the man and his environment or his interpreters, questions of originality and of influence, the varying attitudes towards him,—ranging from exaggerated enthusiasm and hero-worship to equally exaggerated hostility,—the tendency to start from the stage inaugurated by the man forgetful of the already pre-existing conditions, the impetus given to particular aspects of thought to the exclusion of a more comprehensive survey, and the speed with which the environment is sometimes influenced.

The great advantage of perceptual proof.—It is particularly interesting to observe how quickly Darwinism revolutionized many branches of research. Its success lay not merely in the tendencies of the age, not merely in the skilful manner in which Darwin wrote and argued, but also in the fact that those who could lay aside their presuppositions or prejudices and weigh evidence were presented with evidence *visible to the senses*. The results of abstract thought or of complicated argumentation may be thoroughly sound, but ordinary people are more impressed by objects of perception. Models, specimens, illustrations, diagrams—in fact anything tangible or visible—will carry more weight than accurate and careful argument which appeals solely to the intellect. In the criticism of the Old Testament the results of excavation showed that the account of the conquest of Palestine by the Israelites as described in the book of Joshua could not be taken as sober history since the archaeological evidence

failed to represent that dislocation of conditions which would have ensued had there been any sweeping successful invasion. This evidence was unambiguous, yet Biblical scholars had previously shown from the internal historical criticism of the Old Testament that the account of the conquest was an exaggeration and that the settlement of the Israelites could only have been a slow process. More was achieved by the archaeological data than by the careful and critical argumentation based upon the ancient records themselves, yet the data would convey absolutely no meaning unless the student had the training that would enable him to realize their significance.

Confusion of perception and conception.—Not the objects but the interpretations placed upon them are essential, and this is seen in the fact that a vague reliance upon objects of perception leads many people to confuse them with the inferences based upon them. Thus, in Old Testament study, again, unimpeachable tangible data—bricks, monuments, or what not—have been taken to be objective proof of certain views bound up with them, and it has sometimes been supposed that the reference to a Biblical name on a tangible object is a trustworthy witness to all that the Old Testament has to say touching it. So, also, William Tell's Chapel and other memorials have convinced some people that the story of his shooting the apple on his son's head must be true. We may recall Caxton's interesting prologue to Sir Thomas Malory's *Noble and Joyous History of King Arthur*. Caxton had remarked that there were suspicions of the authenticity of the stories of Arthur, some people even doubted his ever having existed. To this the reply was made that Arthur's sepulchre was in the monastery of Glastonbury, the print of his seal remained in Westminster Abbey, the Round Table at Winchester, Sir Gawaine's skull in the castle of Dover; "in divers places of England," it was pointed out, "many remem-

brances be yet of him, and shall remain perpetually of him, and also of his knights." This sort of argument would prove the existence of demons and devils and the accuracy of the most unhistorical of narratives and imaginative of romances. It proves too much, but it illustrates how readily we confuse objects of perception with the ideas surrounding them.¹ When we understand adequately we "see" or "visualize"; we follow ideas more readily when there is something visible to assist thought, something to visualize; but unfortunately, when we have bodies or groups of ideas conveniently bound up with some mental image or a name or label, we easily look upon them as static objects and as indivisible wholes.

Thought is dynamic.—Perhaps the most momentous result of Darwinism, and one which is still very imperfectly realized, is its effect upon our conceptions of thought. We return to the long-forgotten idea of a perpetual flux in Nature, and we see events as the outcome of an orderly development; in the successive stages we look for antecedents and consequences, and for "genetic" sequences, and as we find this process in the past we come to anticipate it in the future. No longer does all Nature seem hide-bound, created once and for all, the dynamic point of view sees movement, and in attempting to shape the future is more definitely creative.

New notions of thought.—Ideas suggested by the evolution-theory in becoming common property have been used freely and loosely. The terms sound scientific, and will suggest scientific validity and the orderliness of Nature. Workers in other fields have everywhere been

¹ Dr. D. G. Hogarth, *Authority and Archaeology, Sacred and Profane* (1899), p. ix, after deprecating the statement "an inch of potsherd is worth all Herodotus," writes: ". . . we may often hear an invidious comparison between the sound objective evidence of material documents and the unsound subjective evidence of literature. Yet neither is the latter any less objective than the former, nor is the former less open to subjective falsification than the latter."

stimulated by evolutionary ideas, but it does not follow that the terms they borrow have the precise significance that they have when employed in the study of organisms. A good illustration of misuse is the promiscuous employment of the term "survival," which will be considered in a later chapter. How stimulating and suggestive is the effect of scientific research in organic evolution may be seen in the very natural enquiry whether the apparent recapitulation of the hypothetical evolution of the race in the human embryo finds any *psychical* analogy in the development of consciousness in the individual and in the race. Does the growing child in any way recapitulate *psychical* stages similar to those in the growth of consciousness in mankind? Is there any parallel in the growth of religion in the child and in the race? Such questions are at once seen to be of more than speculative interest for their bearing upon theories of education and for all efforts to influence "psychical levels" other than our own. In some way or other there has been a pretty successful education of the race from the days of prehistoric primitive men, and anything that threw light upon the essentials of success would be useful in an age that strove to improve conditions for the future. But quite apart from the value of such an enquiry, the rapid progress of organic research since Darwin's time has stirred men in other fields and has caused their thought to move along new lines. The investigation of the external, visible, and relatively simple data of the organic world has powerfully affected investigation in those more complex and intricate realms where the history of human thought is concerned. We are indebted to Darwinism for new and better metaphors and analogies, and, in slowly moving away from old conceptions of things, thought becomes more flexible. At the same time, what is more important, we come to realize that our conceptions of thought are lamentably imperfect.

Our visualization of thought is apt to be too static.

Thought is not a static structure.—We speak of the erection or overthrow or downfall of a theory, of demolishing or destroying beliefs, and in general we use metaphors derived from the world of perception, the heritage from a bygone age.¹ One is wont to speak of the British Constitution or of Christianity as visible objects or structures which can be overturned, and if in the past this has been anticipated or feared, it is only because the groups of ideas involved were regarded by individuals as objects as much liable to injury as a chair or a table. In Old Testament controversy one may read that the present critical position rests upon a certain theory, and if this theory were proved to be incorrect—and the writer usually goes on to show that this is so—the critical position would fall like a house of cards. Yet we know from experience that should any of *our* bodies of thought be found to contain weak, vulnerable, or erroneous elements, *we* are able to make some sort of adjustment. Hence, when we hear of the possibility, *e.g.*, of Christianity being “overthrown,” the question arises whether certain individuals have not merely objectified their ideas, and whether those who repudiate the notion can make the adjustment that may prove necessary.² If we could conceive Darwin’s work being honeycombed by errors, would Darwinism be one huge mistake? Clearly not, objectify as we may our ideas of Darwinism or the like, we must not forget that they depend upon individuals, *they* are responsible for their persistence, survival, and development.³

¹ Note also the incorrect, misleading, but familiar metaphors which speak of “putting back the clock,” or of “reactionary” or “retrograde” movements, and so forth. They are often used as though they represented accurately the processes of thought!

² The fact that civilizations have decayed, that religions and constitutions have succumbed cannot, of course, be ignored, but this does not make the “possibility” a “probability.”

³ The reader can of course replace Darwin (or Darwinism) by any other body of ideas associated with some famous name or names.

Metaphors of thought.—It is possible that a closer study of the movement of thought, as illustrated by the history of special studies, would enable us to check the defects of our mechanical and stationary conceptions of thought. Biology itself may prove suggestive. We may liken the movements of special studies or of bodies of thought to the growth of organic bodies, continually casting off some of the old and putting on new, always growing and outgrowing earlier forms, yet presenting a continuous development from an earlier stage. At all events it is highly desirable to avoid thinking of any body or group of ideas as an inorganic object or as something working like a machine. Do not be misled by metaphors that beg the question. To say that an opponent's view or theory sets the pyramid on its apex, and that obviously a pyramid cannot stand on its apex, is extremely effective, but the ordinary individual often does not see the outrageous fallacy. To compare the working of the consciousness to a machine is no less tempting, but although men may sometimes remind us of machines, not even the most ingenious machine can respond to the environment as does an animal or even a plant. Nor can it develop! Minds of exceptional ability have been able to make cunning self-working machines, but it would be absurd to suppose that the human mind is a machine, though one somewhat more intricate and complex. Any thorough-going mechanistic way of looking at thought illustrates the ease with which we explain the greater from the less, the more complex from the more simple, the unknown from the known. If it is unavoidable—the progress of research has been by explaining the greater from the less and the unknown from the known—the error creeps in through an imperfect knowledge of what is supposed to be known.¹

¹ It may not be too daring to add that, as the study of organic evolution becomes more intricate, and simple explanations are found to

The influence of Biblical criticism.—The third great factor in the foundation of the modern stage of the Study of Religions has been the progress of Biblical studies. These, pursued in connexion with and influenced by the general movement of thought, have vitally affected the attitudes of religious men to Christianity and the Bible. The “criticism” of the Bible is the careful investigation of its contents, conducted on the same lines as the criticism of other sources. Taking its rise in very simple beginnings, this criticism has, in spite of continuous opposition, reached a stage which marks an entirely new era in the history of Christianity. Furthered rather by religious individuals than by the shrewd—though thoroughly unmethodical—efforts of rationalists and atheists of all sorts, it is placing the Bible in a new light. No longer the sole authoritative source or centre of all knowledge, no longer the Book with which almost all thought was woven—the Bible may be regarded, for purposes of criticism, as the outcome of certain unique vicissitudes in the history of ancient Palestine. As the object of specialistic investigation it takes its place among other material bearing upon Palestine and the surrounding lands, and, consequently, admits of being studied apart from its place in the history of Christianity. But while this treatment connects the Book with the history of conditions in a far-off land and at a distant age, the Bible, the fruit of *ancient* experiences, will ultimately reappear, not as a record of the history of mankind from the Creation of Adam in or about the year 4004 B.C., but as part of that more profound evolution of man and thought which

be inadequate, the observation and study of the peculiarly flexible though not irregular movement of bodies of thought may serve to suggest possibilities and explanations more realistic and helpful than the mechanical forms of thought permit. The actual movement of thought is more like actual organic evolution than anything that can be represented by model or machine. Organic life and thought resemble one another in their movement more than either resembles that of the most cunning of human constructions.

concerns all mankind. The aim of criticism is ultimately not merely to disentangle composite narratives, to test or — if necessary — reject long-held beliefs touching the historical value, the meaning, or the dates of this or the other passage, but it is also to elucidate ancient types of consciousness, and their significance for our conception of the Universe. Criticism, historical in its main tendencies, aims at placing the Bible in a newer and profounder history of Man and the Universe (see below, p. 342).

Evolution in Biblical criticism.—This criticism, as is well known, investigates and endeavours to cope with serious difficulties in the Bible which have forced themselves upon the minds of people of all kinds, and have frequently occasioned perplexity and distress. Much has already been successfully accomplished, but a great deal still remains to be done, partly in technical matters, partly in the way of correlating results with those in other fields. As regards the Old Testament, the present stage is characterized by certain hypotheses of a literary nature, and is conveniently and properly associated with the name of the German scholar Julius Wellhausen. Now, Wellhausen's theory of the relative dates of certain portions of the Pentateuch gave the clue to the treatment of the Old Testament for critical purposes. His theory was not his alone, it was already in the air, and others before and after him contributed to its success. But his argumentation in 1878 was so forcible and thorough that scholars of the Old Testament were obliged to pay heed to it and to formulate their attitude.¹ As in the case of Darwinism (p. 50), the crisis clarified research, a new stage was inaugurated by one man who was in touch with contemporary knowledge, a fresh and fruitful impetus was given to study along new lines, and the result has been

¹ The reference is to his *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Eng. trans., 1885). Further reference may be made to his article "Pentateuch," *Ency. Brit.*, 9th ed. (art. "Hexateuch," *Ency. Biblica*).

that, even though subsequent workers have made modifications, their positions are more distinctively those of Wellhausen than of any of his opponents or predecessors. If the age finds the man, if the development of thought is ripe for those who are able to express current tendencies in a way that marks a new era, it may often seem easy to say that had there not been these particular individuals, others would have arisen. But this lies outside enquiry.¹ It is as futile as to enquire what would have ensued had epoch-making events in political history had a different result. This principle applies to individuals who have inaugurated successful movements in the religious history of the world—some suggested situations are too hypothetical to arouse speculation.

Some aspects of psychical evolution.—It is worth noticing, also, that in the case of Darwin and Wellhausen we do not find in their life-history anything corresponding to a recapitulation of the development of their particular fields. They and their like do not always take and utilize the "bricks" furnished by their co-workers; like the Israelites of old, they have usually collected their material and made their own "bricks." In other words, they have been more independent, untrammelled by conventional or current "schools," and more individualistic. We have in them a psychical development with distinctive individual characteristics, men who intervene and carry the studies to a higher point. This recalls the idea of *Isolation* as a factor in organic evolution. "I do not doubt," said Darwin, "that isolation is of considerable importance in the formation of new species"; and Romanes maintained that for their origin it was a *sine qua non*.² The analogy lies in the fact that neither Darwin nor Wellhausen

¹ Though "Darwinism" and "Wellhausenism" were in the air, one looks in vain for men who could have played the part actually taken by Darwin and Wellhausen.

² See J. A. Thomson and P. Geddes, *Evolution* (Home University Library Series), p. 178 *seq.*

who mark new eras in the evolution of thought can be said to have entered into the labours of their predecessors. They have a characteristic individuality as scholars. This is true of Darwin¹ while Wellhausen at the early age of twenty-three admits that he was already reaching out to the epoch-making theory associated with him.² Our conception of the evolution of a study, therefore, must not be one that confuses it with the evolution of thought in the individual: his evolution is not to be confused with that of the environment in which he grows up.³

This leads us to observe another instructive feature. The study is advanced by the work of men, who, as has just been mentioned, do not necessarily pass through the stages through which it has passed. By their work, and often by the life-work of a few, there are prominent advances in thought, but this does not mean that thenceforth every individual has to pass from the preceding to the new stage. An age may fight the battles of the freedom of conscience, of evolution, of inspiration, of the criticism of the Bible, or whatever it may be, and the next

¹ *Op. cit.* p. 186: "It is important to shake ourselves free from all creationist appreciations of Darwin, but it would be a perversion of history to suggest that he simply entered into the labours of his predecessors. In point of fact, he knew very little about them till after he had been for years at work."

² Wellhausen, *Prolegomena* (Eng. trans., p. 3 *seq.*). The experience brought to bear is not necessarily one that had been bound up with the subject. St. Augustine (A.D. 354-430), one of the four great Fathers of the Church, and the most important, as the originator of a new era in Christian thought, may be regarded as a telling illustration of another form of Isolation in that it was not until his thirty-second year that he became converted to Christianity. On the other hand, the defects of continued isolation can be illustrated in Herbert Spencer (see Thomson and Geddes, p. 217 *seq.*): "How little in essential thought does his reasoned philosophy get beyond its initial statement in his sporadic essays? and how largely are these, in qualities and in limitations alike, the expressions of his boyish and his youthful education, his professional experience?" There is perhaps an opening for a comparative study of biography, with special attention to the phases of the psychological development of the individual in his relation to the thought of his environment.

³ See above, p. 36.

age is the gainer. Certain changes are introduced into thought, and certain people pass through the stress of these changes; adjustment follows and the men of the next generation may be quite unable to appreciate or even to comprehend the vicissitudes by which they have benefited. The revolution among the few becomes an evolution among the many that constitute the environment. This feature forces us to pay closer attention to the movement of thought at all ages, and on all levels; it gives us a clearer idea of the significance of important developments in the past, and it shows us that equally important changes in the future may ensue by the activity of those who will take up the burden.

Different attitudes in Old Testament criticism.¹—

The main results of Old Testament criticism have been to provide a standpoint for viewing its contents, and a general historical outline fundamentally different from that held by most of the writers themselves. Were it not for these results it would be quite impossible to make any effective comparison between Hebrew or Palestinian religion and the religions of Oriental and other peoples, and the Old Testament would virtually be a closed book for all scholarly study. Needless to say, there is much variation of opinion even among those who adopt the Wellhausen position. The same data are viewed rather

¹ The Old Testament represents in many respects a connecting link between ordinary Christian religious ideas and those found among rudimentary peoples removed from our ways of thinking, and often difficult to grasp. The criticism of the Old Testament is especially important because it involves the study of vicissitudes which sever the old Oriental empires and their religions from a new era which leads on to Christianity and modern culture. Moreover, the field is one where the purely "religious" and the purely "secular" commingle; and the methods of research are suggestive for the treatment of the "religious" and "secular" problems of the Universe. Finally, an attitude towards the Old Testament that did justice to religious convictions and the best relevant knowledge would be very closely akin to the attitude towards the Universe that satisfied the "religious" and the "secular" data.

differently by different scholars, though their collective conception of the Old Testament would differ very widely from that of those who occupy what may be called a traditional or conservative position.¹ Whatever the latter may "see" when they think of the Old Testament, the "critical" school have bodies of ideas flexible enough to "see" the Old Testament both as the remains of the literature of a small portion of ancient Palestine, and as an integral part of the Bible. The possession of a two-fold attitude of this sort, one purely specialistic with an eye to the future of one's special study, and the other more comprehensive and more fitted for ordinary life, is helpful in that it tends to co-ordinate one's tested knowledge with the life one shares in the environment. There is a story told of a man who cut out from his Bible all the portions as to which his minister expressed critical doubts and thanked him for leaving the covers intact. It is a disgraceful story, but thoroughly typical, because it illustrates a rather common type of mind which objectifies its ideas and cannot view them apart from the external object. Such minds can be found in most societies, and they enable us to understand some characteristic tendencies in human nature. Again, when the Wellhausen theory was being introduced, one of the most distinctive events was the sudden removal of one of the sources running through the Pentateuch from a date prior to the other sources to a post-exilic date.² At a stroke, the entire face of the Pentateuchal problems was changed by a step which to the outsider has always seemed daring, if not incomprehensible. Yet to those who "see" the Old Testament with the critic's eye the step was obvious, natural, and simple. Thus it happens

¹ Moreover, each scholar would hold an individual body of opinions to which the latter could not subscribe. The same applies of course to any two conflicting parties of any importance.

² The reference is to the "Priestly" source, conveniently symbolized by P.

that changes and movements that appear abrupt, sudden, or discontinuous when looked at from one point of view may be perfectly orderly and inevitable when viewed in their own light. If in organic evolution it is disputed whether Nature moves by leaps or bounds, in psychical evolution, at all events, the most profound "jumps" do not necessarily appear so striking when a comprehensive view is taken of the situation. As another illustration one may take the history of David. Every one understands that it would be possible to construct a biography from the books of Samuel and Chronicles. But from the critical point of view this would confuse *actual events* of David's time with *representations* of David's history drawn up many centuries later and representing later conditions. Certain sources would be depicting conditions which belong about five centuries after David's death, and consequently if we were not careful we should be continuously passing from David's time to the post-exilic age and then back again.¹ Here and also elsewhere when we read of similar remarkable leaps in Old Testament research, what often happens is that while one scholar is thinking of *events* at such and such a period, another is thinking of *descriptions of the events*, but written at various times. It is a very simple but fundamental difference, and differences of this sort, depending upon standpoint, are all-important for the study of life and thought.²

¹ So, too, in the early chapters of Genesis, is one reading *objective* ante-diluvian history, or what was *supposed* to have happened in that period? It is easy to see how much depends upon the attitude of the reader, and that some "discontinuities" in the account of David, for example, are subjective. Does this not suggest that the "discontinuities" and "leaps" and "gaps" in Nature may be largely subjective—due to our ignorance, or to our way of regarding the external world?

² The differences of opinion in regard to some pairs of antitheses, like the gaps between the holy and the profane or between the sacred and the secular, are not so marked when we observe opposing views touching some particular phenomenon, or when we consider the transition in the feeling-states of an individual. The same objective phenomenon may

The work of Robertson Smith.—The present diverse tendencies of Old Testament criticism would seem to be pointing to some new general position as distinctive as that inaugurated by Wellhausen, and in this the comparative study of religions must necessarily take a part. Now the most valuable application of this study to the Old Testament is due to that great genius William Robertson Smith, who gave English-speaking people the first exposition of the Wellhausen theory. Robertson Smith, a theologian and an Orientalist, a man of great theological, mathematical, and scientific ability, and equipped with an enormous stock of knowledge, provided in his lectures on *The Religion of the Semites* what is justly believed to be the soundest introduction to the study. Indeed, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that in subsequent efforts to make better that which he made so good, there has often been a tendency to a certain one-sidedness, and to faults which he explicitly condemned. His great book was an epoch-making work in the comparative study of religions.¹ In a sense he may be styled the direct successor of old John Spencer of the seventeenth century. Of Spencer's book he himself said that it "still remains by far the most important book on the religious antiquities of the Hebrews,"² and he may well be regarded as the one who carried on Spencer's work, but in harmony with the superior knowledge that had since accumulated. There are certain features in his life-work which are of great interest for our ideas of the development of thought and the inauguration of new stages, and it will be helpful to note them as an example of the way in which the individual can influence his environment.³

be holy to one and profane to another, and the same individual may pass readily through successive states of feeling involving these antitheses (cf. above, p. 33).

¹ 1st ed., 1889; 2nd ed., 1894. ² Preface, p. vi; see above, p. 39.

³ See in addition to the following paragraphs the present writer's review of the *Life of W. R. Smith* (by J. S. Black and G. Chrystal, 1912), in the *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1912, pp. 211-217.

Some features of his work.—As regards comparative research, Robertson Smith came at a time when the general lines had been fairly laid down ; but his work has a distinctive independence as a whole, and this severs him from the current schools of Biblical thought which he most nearly approached. He laboured in what might seem to be a relatively small area, but he was a master of it ; and his treatment of Semitic religions stimulated research both in his own field and without. His work exemplified the importance of studying religions in their own context. It is necessary to detach, isolate, and investigate separate data for purposes of comparison, but only by a wide survey of areas that have a history can one at all clearly understand the significance of one's evidence. Robertson Smith's fine historical knowledge kept him from that narrow and somewhat promiscuous treatment of religious and other evidence gathered from all the world over, which belongs to folk-lore rather than to any scientific study of what religion has been.

The individual and the field of study.—Next, although Robertson Smith was markedly independent, he was not isolated from his environment.¹ As scholar, teacher, and preacher, he was in touch with many types of mind. This is significant, because the outside pioneering work in Biblical criticism, however brilliant and stimulating, was hardly suitable for the average individual. It awaited a synthetic, intelligible, and not too technical exposition. Now Smith had been gradually adjusting the new views of Continental scholars with his own, and in his famous lectures in 1881 on *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, he gave what was no *réchauffé* of Continental specialistic research, but the results of a new stage in the development of his attitude to the Old Testament—one that allowed him to combine in one whole his progressive tendencies with an evangelical and dogmatic Protestantism.

¹ On isolation as a factor in evolution, see above, p. 59 *seq.*

The effort was remarkably successful: the inauguration of a new stage in the field of Old Testament research. In the English-speaking world it came through one who had that most valuable kind of originality which "enables a man to draw with independence from the most varied sources, and to use what he obtains according to a plan and principles and for a purpose of his own."¹ Smith was completely in touch with the ordinary environment and could realize its needs; and being also a brilliant specialist, he was able to estimate and assimilate the current specialistic movements which lay too much outside the ordinary thought, and were sometimes apt to be too extreme. And this feature also characterizes his *Religion of the Semites*, where, once more, ordinary intelligent thought and individualistic and specialistic enquiry were brought together and adjusted. The book combined keen critical research and a sincere religious feeling, and it gave readers at once his conception of the Semitic religions and his own attitude to religion generally.

Religion and intellect.—Finally, Robertson Smith with all his genius, his social traits, his saneness, his scholarship, and his confident progressiveness was a "problem." To the progressive his orthodoxy seemed incomprehensible; to the orthodox his "revolutionary" ideas were perplexing. He himself, however, appears to have been unable to understand why his advances should bring the opposition of the orthodox, while at the same time he had no sympathy with the crude rationalist. Charges of obscurantism are readily brought against such as he, and one ingenuous writer even said of him that he "was at heart unspotted from the world of reason."² Now, Smith least of all men could be termed an obscurantist, and it is well to notice that words of this kind offer

¹ R. Flint, *The History of the Philosophy of History* (1893), p. 265.

² From a review cited in the *Life of W. R. Smith*, by J. S. Black and G. W. Chrystal, i. 572.

no explanation of the phenomena to which they refer. It may seem strange to some that individuals, apparently intelligent, should entertain ideas of a supernaturalistic character, but the fact remains that while such ideas are to be found among men otherwise rational, those in whom they are not found do not necessarily show themselves more intelligent, more discerning, or more rational. The importance of such a figure as Robertson Smith lies in the fact that he manifested what he taught his readers to look for in the study of religions—a system of thought wherein the religious and other aspects of life were co-ordinated; a system fundamentally theological, and not merely philosophical or ethical or mystical; a system that allowed growth; a system such as is found again and again in the history of the world's religions. The progress of thought has indeed dislocated such systems, but so constantly do we find religious beliefs co-ordinated with the amount of knowledge possessed by the environment, that what a single individual can do, when *his* religious and other ideas are co-ordinated, can be achieved by a whole group when the knowledge and the experience possessed by the different members of the group are brought into a natural state of harmony. When, in periods of transition, thought is no longer coherent and knowledge is discordant, the group as a whole will possess no single system as a whole; but the presence of diverse features—religious, non-religious, and anti-religious—will indicate the diverse types of minds that stand in need of nourishment.

Attitudes to Smith's work.—The Wellhausen position which Robertson Smith championed has always encountered opposition. The trials to which Smith was subjected, the earlier hostility against Bishop Colenso, later trials and charges on both sides of the Atlantic, and even some phases of modern religious thought are enough to show with what suspicion or mistrust the critical study of the Bible can be viewed. On the other hand, Smith's *Religion*

of the Semites does not appear to have aroused such feelings, although he himself realized that his subject was "not one of mere antiquarian curiosity, but has a direct and important bearing on the great problem of the origins of the spiritual religion of the Bible" (p. 2 *seq.*). Considerable portions of Christian theology are very significantly affected by his conclusions; yet, apart from some occasional allusion by the reviewers, general religious opinion does not seem to have realized their grave significance. At all events, while opinion was roused into action by his work on the Old Testament, the significance of his earlier lectures and essays on Inspiration, Revelation, and the Supernatural, and of his later work on the Religion of the Semites would not seem to have been fully understood.¹

They depend on subjective bodies of thought.—Now, Robertson Smith from first to last was able in all sincerity to reconcile his own views with dogmatic Protestantism. Not so his opponents, who saw in another light the effect his views tended to produce, even as Newman in his turn feared the outcome of religious "liberalism." Into their bodies of thought Smith's work brought intolerable incompatibilities; and, indeed, it is impossible not to perceive that, from a certain standpoint, those who held the more traditional position were justified. If Smith saw no inconsistency in his world of thought, even though Christian dogma was affected quite as intimately as by many works of unsympathetic writers which could be named, there were those who realized keenly that the consequences were larger than he imagined. And in fact the consequences have become more vital. If we say that his opponents *saw* further than he did it must be recognized that the term is metaphorical; they realized interconnexions of ideas in a way he did not; they could not detach themselves from certain ideas which, however, did

¹ Some of the earlier work has been collected and published by J. S. Black and G. W. Chrystal (above, p. 64 n. 3).

not impress him. He added fuel to a fire which has spread more widely than he imagined; in applying his intellect to the problems as *he* found them, he has left grave problems for others. If *he* could reconcile his knowledge with his faith, it would surely be remarkable if further advances of research made a like reconciliation of knowledge and faith impossible in modern thought.

Some inferences.—In the conflicting attitudes we perceive that the essential difference lies in the mental outlook or in the body of thought of the parties concerned. A Robertson Smith has his own world of thought; his opponent has one which cannot admit, for the time being at all events, the views he is opposing. We see, first, that a novelty in thought is judged from the extent to which individual minds can adjust it to their outlook, from the place it would hold in their own world of thought; and this is generally true for all times and lands.¹ Second, when those who have different attitudes “see” things differently, and in all sincerity, we can ascribe this to the character of their bodies of thought; and the question will arise whether it is possible to determine their relative value. Third, while we may easily see the significance of some novelties in thought, that of others is not apparent until they have taken root. Now, if they took root because the soil was ready for them, can we condemn their growth because we feel unable to continue the adjustment which was begun by our predecessors? The dislocation involved by novelties of thought becomes more critical when, owing to the interconnexion of ideas, a larger area of thought is affected. The movement of thought, dislocating, unsettling, and touching both the world of life and the world of thought, is due, not to scientists, scholars, and critics alone, not to rationalists, agnostics, and atheists alone, not to theologians and

¹ The view that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch or that “P is post-exilic” (p. 62 n. 2) will thus be estimated by the reader.

divines alone, and since the present stage of thought may be traced back step by step to the Renaissance and the Reformation, we must certainly go back further and regard it simply as the outcome of the development of Western Europe. It may be a development as normal or as inevitable as that period of unsettlement in the individual when he approaches manhood. The more one is able to realize the multiplicity of factors that account for present conditions, the more impressive becomes the character of the problems that present themselves to thoughtful minds eager to lay down the road for posterity. The "responsibility" for the conditions is seen to rest on others besides ourselves (p. 290 *seq.*).

All Scientific Research and ordinary average Thought are interconnected.—Perhaps these imperfect remarks may have shown that the comparative Study of Religions has been influenced in its progress by the general progress of thought and by the interconnexion of many factors. Any particular tendencies in it which may be disturbing are due to the factors that have influenced the individuals responsible for them. If the critic of the Old Testament, in furthering *his* study, relieves the difficulties and perplexities of some, he is undoubtedly playing into the hands of a crude rationalism which is his greatest enemy; yet the most important principles that justify his criticism are allowed by those who hold a distinctly conservative position.¹ The same is true of the study of religions; the most moderate criticism is essentially related to the more intense but less methodical argumentation of those who appear to be bitterly hostile to all religion. It would seem that once a movement of thought has been started and recognized, it cannot be hindered from any fear of the consequences,

¹ All progressive movements are hampered by the "extreme" individuals; they correspond to the excessive and hopelessly one-sided "specialists" in research of all kinds.

for the consequences may be just those that some people desire. If we would face the facts we must realize the interconnexion of thought. If a study owes everything to the age, it can influence the age ; the study of religions, then, must take its place along with others that are shaping the thought of the future. It is to " take its place," for even though some may claim that it should have the premier place, it is bound up with the progress of other studies in such a way that it must not stand apart.

The more we observe the play and interplay of thought, the less likely shall we be to think of confining religion itself, the study of religion, or any other subject of thought in a water-tight compartment.

No aspect of thought can remain isolated.—The interconnexion between subjects or studies—all of which depend upon a number of individuals—is as vital as that between the various groups of ideas, thoughts, and the like that go to make up the mental world—the psychical environment—of every individual. For the most hide-bound and narrow-minded of men obviously has some thoughts outside his own special field. This concerns the student of religions, who may aim at specializing in the subject. It is futile for any serious student to suppose that studies outside his own may be ignored—nothing can lie quite outside any body of ideas fostered by an individual, though it may be irrelevant for his purposes. It is perhaps even premature to map out the field for collaboration, for this would hamper free development, and injure individual liberty of research as surely as would any State that sought to map out occupations for its members. Such specialization might be advantageous, for example, in a big business undertaking where there is a central directive control. Yet, to be sure, even here it is apt to inhibit initiative and to cause a decay of active personality among the subordinates. But who would exercise control in research ? What seems

more free than the individual liberty of those who have promoted research? On the other hand, who does not recognize that there is a certain coherence and organization among those who work in any one field? There is something that acts as a control even in the field of free individual intellectual research. There is something that gives a certain coherence and collectivity, and replaces an aggregate of individuals by a group, resembling in some points a community or social body. Although we are now about to pass on to some aspects of specialism, we are really opening up a far more fundamental problem, because in the study of religions one is constantly obliged to consider now the influence of the individual, and now that of the group or whole to which he belongs. The progress of mankind has depended upon the individuals who severally or collectively contributed to the environment of which they formed part; the progress of every study or subject of thought depends upon the individual exponents; and the progress of every individual's body or world of thoughts and ideas depends upon its constituents. Everywhere the whole depends upon the parts, and the parts cannot be ultimately severed from the whole; and since religion is everywhere a *part* of something, a *constituent* of some larger whole, it cannot be understood by treating it in isolation from its context. In turning, therefore, to the significance of the individual and of individualistic specialism, we shall be gaining evidence and conclusions that are useful for the study of the nature and the movement of religions and religious thought.

CHAPTER III

SPECIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM : I. GENERAL FEATURES

The rise of specialism.—The growth of knowledge in Western Europe is marked by the rise of divisions and subdivisions; the field has become differentiated, “specialistic” research has been instituted, and the endeavour made to handle subjects for and by themselves.¹ Step by step subjects were removed from the context in which they had previously been imbedded, and often the procedure provoked much opposition. In the Middle Ages considerable advances had been made—this is often forgotten—but only in a few definite grooves. Knowledge was bound up with a philosophy and a theology centering in the Bible and the Church. The theological standpoint predominated, and such research as was undertaken was influenced by considerations which were practical and utilitarian, because religion and religious ideas had an immediate bearing upon all important phases of life. These words, “practical” and “utilitarian,” are not to be narrowly limited, as often at the present day, to purely material advantages. Where there was the vivid anticipation of a life extending beyond the bodily state, what bore upon the future fate of the individual was enormously important. But Religion

¹ The reader may be reminded at the outset of the analogy between the evolution of thought, subjects of thought, and bodies of thought, and that of organic life. See above, p. 56, note.

and Nature were things to be accepted and not enquired into ; life and knowledge were bound up in one great body of thought. What were to become subjects of special scientific research had first to be severed from their existing environment of the occult, the supernatural, the religious, and the contemporary philosophy. Cosmology became geology ; astrology and alchemy became astronomy and chemistry. Yet what could be more utilitarian than astrology and the influence of the stars upon life, than alchemy and the search for the philosopher's stone ? And what immediate value could there be in those pursuits which ultimately gave us astronomy or chemistry ? However, to take a single example, the stars were now studied apart from the ideas with which they had commonly been associated, they became the centre of a new body of ideas. It was as though people began to study Mars without thinking of Martians, messages, and martial topics. Progress was made by cutting adrift and pursuing subjects along lines the immediate value of which could not at once be seen, the danger of which, from the current standpoint, was obvious. It is unnecessary to go into further detail, it is enough to ask whether any modern discovery of the traces of prehistoric man is viewed in the light of its bearing upon the early chapters of Genesis, or the Bible, or the doctrine of literal infallibility ; or whether intelligent men do not place it with current theories of geological and anthropological research. But let us note that in either case the endeavour is made to put it into *some* environment, body, or context.

Specialism and individuality.—Now the factor in this change, which is typical of others, is the power to look at things apart from some current context, to analyse, compare, and criticize them, to keep them in suspense, and to place them in a new context. It is the ability to see and to think anew, to depart from some customary

point of view, that has been the chief factor in the development of art, literature, research, religion, and the rest. But while it does not follow that every novelty arising out of this procedure is valuable, it is evident that unless there were novelty and change there would be stagnation. There is the risk of error in all movement and departure from the trodden paths. The appearance of any novel feature in thought is an invitation for us to test its worth. Whether we ultimately decide to reject it or not, we ourselves undergo some psychical change which would not have happened had we ignored the feature or had we refrained from considering it rationally. The presence of marked divergence of opinion is an indication that many individuals are differing in their ways of seeing things and of thinking of them ; but although this points to movement of thought, the history of the past shows that progress comes only by a careful and critical testing of the fruits of all the individual minds involved. And it is by no means the case that the majority are sounder than the minority.

Psychological factors in the process.—The main psychological factor involved in change is not so much curiosity as a certain attentive interest. Mere curiosity is shared by animals ; continued and thoughtful attention is on a higher plane of psychical development. Further, it is to be noticed that although curiosity or attention may be aroused by a novelty, what has been profoundly effective in the past has been a new view of old and familiar things. Things may be *objectively* new—wireless telegraphy, radio-activity, a new fact or theory, etc.—but what is *subjectively* new depends upon a change in oneself, in one's ideas and thoughts. There is a psychical development of the individuals concerned, even the *objectively* new things occasion some *subjective* development. Moreover, when we see the old in a new way we give the old a new lease of life, and by endorsing or re-

instating some inheritance from the past we are adjusting to our environment something that our predecessors had in theirs. In this way there is a combination of continuity and development.¹ Finally, attention suggests interest, some feeling of significance however vague, some sense of value however rudimentary. Most people could trace back some of their present interests to a time when they had not the slightest idea of their meaning, utility, or potentiality. Attention on the part of some youthful and undeveloped consciousness will often shape some particular activity which is afterwards seen to be exceedingly valuable. The engineer, the painter, the soldier, and all who showed a very early interest in what afterwards became their profession, manifested an attentive regard at a time when they were too young to have the slightest conception of the meaning of their childish interests. This feature is familiar, but singularly suggestive, for what often recurs in the individual recurs in the progress of astronomy, chemistry, and other studies. There was a feeling leading men along lines the outcome of which they could not guess, and their aims and motives, whatever they were, are strictly independent of the issues of their labours; cf. below, p. 239.

Significance of the process.—We who look back and see the steps in the past may say that men worked in the dark. This is incorrect, the truth is that each was working out his own aims according to his own lights, and contributing unconsciously to that of which *we* are conscious. The only intelligible way in which we can represent the facts is to estimate them in their own background, and not from our retrospect. This means that we must take a collective or comprehensive view of the process, and recognize that the early workers in the field of knowledge

¹ Compare, *e.g.*, religious ideas that have been reshaped or readjusted in the course of the development of thought; the ideas persist, but in a developed form. See further Chapter IX. *seq.*

were conditioned by the circumstances of their age ; they were striving according to their methods and principles, and in the slow development of thought the value of their achievements for *their* environment has developed into a value for *ours*.

The development of knowledge is analogous to that of the individual, in that continued progress discloses a fuller significance of the earlier steps. There is nothing disjointed or discontinuous in the development of the normal individual. He retains his personality throughout, he becomes more conscious of his powers and responsibilities, and yet the earlier stages of his activities belong to a time when he was not and could not be fully aware of their possibilities.¹ Now, when we deal with the development of knowledge we can appreciate the steps only when we view them as part of a whole. The fact that we speak of the growth of knowledge, the revival of learning (p. 37 *seq.*), and so forth, shows how naturally we regard the aggregate of happenings as more or less co-ordinated parts of some larger whole, and this intuitive or unreflective way of regarding the evidence is not unjustifiable. Our conception of the movement of thought will be incomplete, therefore, unless we treat it as part of certain processes, the true meaning of which will obviously depend upon a better knowledge of what thought is.

The significance of individuality.—The progress of knowledge has depended upon the labours of individuals. They have been able to look at things in a new light, to take up their stand against current views, to exercise patience, and to manifest courage, strength of purpose,

¹ In every development of this character there arise such questions as the "birth" or "dawn" of "intelligence." It will be observed that logically, and on the theory of evolution, the stage where we first recognize "intelligence," according to our definition of it, must be preceded by a stage that could naturally allow the development : the stage of "intellect" will be preceded logically by a *pre-intellectual* (not a *non-intellectual*) stage. See p. 238, note.

and perseverance. Our admiration must be excited when we consider the history of thought and the difficulties against which the pioneering minds had to contend. Nothing shows more clearly the narrowness of the view that ascribes the movement of thought to the social body as a vague whole. To the will and courage of each and every pioneer, at each and every stage, to the explorers in unknown lands of thought plunging into new paths, we owe the advances in knowledge that have so often been made in the teeth of bitter and blind opposition. Now although this may be very familiar, there is obviously a deeper psychical meaning. We can recognize in our analysis of the phenomena a certain Force impelling such individuals along new directions and towards results which they were quite unable to conceive. Those who take paths in opposition to the social group, or who manifest their independence in disagreeing with their environment, or who persist against current outlooks, are not automata or machines, which physiology and chemistry enable us to analyse. It is evident that our analysis is incomplete unless we may speak of a force, power, or energy which, whether it is consciously recognized by such individuals or not, makes all the difference between an automatic, mechanical, or passive evolution or growth and one that is active, creative, and responsible. This force or power which pushes such men on, which impels every one each in his own way, must enter into every treatment of religion, even though this means that we must recognize it also in those who manifest their hostility to religion. This psychical feature, necessary for the psychological treatment of the subject, may complicate the problem, but it cannot be ignored. The force that moves men along lines we favour cannot be severed—in any impartial enquiry—from its appearance in tendencies which we repudiate. Just as in physical science we postulate *energy*, so here we have to postulate

a psychological factor in order to explain the difference between passivity and active development even in the face of opposition.

“**Psychical realities.**”—The question of the objective reality of this factor is difficult. We cannot see, visualize, touch, measure, calculate, or make a model of love, or hate, or patriotism, but we are justified in using those terms to express something that is at least *psychically* real ; we can see the effects of its presence and of its absence. Again, we are wont to speak of *esprit de corps*. No one can produce this “corporate spirit,” but all will agree that it is extremely effective, and that without it there would be no coherence in social life, in research, in athletics, or even in a society devoted to the propagation of rationalism ! It is a *psychical* reality. In the realm of ideas, beliefs, and convictions we have these psychical entities which can be viewed objectively, yet have no material objectivity. They do not belong to the realm of the senses ; they are neither perceptible nor tangible. If anything, they are more important. The evolution of a study is not a “real” thing, in the sense that the evolution of the child or the grub is “real” to us who observe it. It exists in minds, but it is enormously powerful. The evolution of scientific research and the theory of evolution itself have no “real” existence, yet perhaps nothing could be more profound. They are more effective than all the objects of sense, than all the skeletons, diagrams, and models that are contained in class-rooms or laboratories, simply because they provide us with the way in which we may regard the objects of the perceptible and tangible world. Real though the “outside world” may be, the desire to understand and explain it is part of a reality of another order, and a more fundamental one. The test of all realities of this order is not what eye can see or what hand can touch, it is what is most effective, most potent, and what can be seen by its works and its

fruits, what moves the individual in his aims and motives and makes him view the world as he does.¹

The evolution of a study.—It is helpful and legitimate to trace the course of development of some “branch” of knowledge, and the term “branch” shows how readily we conceive of some tree of knowledge branching out and sending forth from time to time small shoots which become veritable boughs. Thus we visualize the origin and connexion of such a subject as astrophysics, or the Comparative Study of Religions. But in point of fact, if we were to consider the state of knowledge at any given time we should find as close an ultimate connexion between the various subjects of study existing at that time as there is in these days of fuller knowledge and more specialistic differentiation. Geology is a modern study, but it is ultimately connected with many other subjects (geography, zoology, botany, etc.), all of which have their roots in past centuries. Geology, like many another study, arose as a subject of independent research by a process of detachment, but the geologist does not and cannot keep in one absolutely isolated and water-tight compartment all that body of data, views, theories, etc., which for the sake of convenience we label “Geology.” In every social group we find a great body of thought shared by the group, collectively, and individuals differing from one another in the extent of their special knowledge of divers subjects. In the past history of the collective body of

¹ It may not be unnecessary to warn the reader against confusing the above remarks with any current system of Idealism, Realism, or Pragmatism. The investigation of beliefs and practices does not concern itself at this point with their objective validity, or with philosophical systems of thought, though it may recognize that they had and have a subjective validity—to the individuals concerned. Ideas, beliefs, and practices are means to an end, and convictions are not so “real” as the individual who holds them. They are the results of psychical processes and belong to an order of reality different from and more ephemeral than the personality of the individual, for while it persists, the various expressions can undergo development and change. See below, p. 186.

thought, sections, or portions have from time to time been separated and elaborated, so that the evolution of a special study is that of a body or group of ideas which is ultimately an integral part of the whole body of thought in the individuals concerned in it or in their environments. Any modern specialistic study that can be traced back, say, to the Middle Ages, does not start from a separate germ, as it were ; it was already then, however exiguous, part of one collective world of thought.¹ For purposes of convenience we may still speak of the evolution of a study, but in reality we are violently separating for the sake of analysis and convenience a part from a closely interconnected whole. All that to which the notion of development or evolution applies is an abstraction, a part of some whole.

The special study and its links.—The progress of a study has depended upon its interconnexions. Thus as regards the Old Testament, while one student cannot for long view it apart from his ideas of Inspiration or Christianity, another can keep his groups of ideas more distinct ; and any one who has observed the history of his own study knows how research can be hindered by involving in it ideas which are subsequently discovered to be irrelevant, and how it can be advanced when a more detached attitude has been adopted. But no sooner do we realize the value of this isolation, detachment, and specialism than we find that error has arisen through the exaggeration of the importance of one particular department to the neglect of another, and that in isolating itself the study has suffered harm. Indeed, the history of knowledge shows that the specialist is invariably obliged to pay attention to other special studies ; and if at one time isolation, detachment, and specialism are indis-

¹ So, too, the evolution of every individual goes back to what was a part of some whole, and the oak springs from an acorn that was once an integral part of an oak.

pensable, at another there must be combination and co-operation. All this bears on the individual and the group, because the individual progresses by a combination of self-reliance, independence, and isolation on the one side, and dependence, co-operation on the other, and either carried to extremes is harmful for him and for his group.

The risks in specialism.—When, for example, one studies Hebrew religion one must isolate the subject from later Judaism and Christianity, and from preconceptions inherited from the Middle Ages. It is indispensable, also, that one should work from the modern position of the criticism of the Old Testament.¹ But one must treat this religion in the light of comparative research, and pay heed to other studies which illuminate the field (*e.g.* sociology and archaeology). In so doing, when one enlists the work of others, to add to one's own limitations, there is at every step the danger of adopting theories or conclusions which are imperfect, erroneous, or antiquated. Difference of opinion among experts is often due mainly to the combination of a first-hand acquaintance with one subject and an untested or uncritical knowledge of another. This is of course unavoidable; no one can hope to gain a proper knowledge of *all* the relevant studies, if only for the fact that one cannot foresee what will or will not be relevant sooner or later. The history of knowledge is marked by the discovery of relevances and irrelevances. Every one, in working according to his lights, is consciously or unconsciously working out his own career, his mental development; but the value of his contribution to the environment is quite another matter—the evolution of the individual and that of his environment are not to be confused (*cf.* p. 35 *seq.*). Now in studying Hebrew religion by itself and for itself it is speedily found that it is becoming something of purely antiquarian interest. It seems to lose its bearing upon modern life, and has no longer

¹ See above, pp. 57 *seq.*

that value for the ordinary man that it had when it was bound up with the Bible, with current theology, and with the early predominating conceptions of the Universe. This, too, is unavoidable ; the advantages due to the progress of knowledge have been at the cost of certain losses, and it may no doubt be safely said that there does not prevail at present any general coherent conception of the Universe in which Hebrew religion, as now understood, could find a place as once it did.

Specialism is not absolute.—If we were to project ourselves into the minds of some of those who are promoting any subject, we should find one more “ conservative,” another more “ radical,” the latter being more detached from that slowly moving general position held by the former. We should find one who, like Robertson Smith, saw no inconsistency between his position as regards his study and his more comprehensive outlook, whereas others might not be able to conceive the possibility of reconciliation ; and we might find another, holding a detached position quite apart from his general outlook, or, like a Descartes, fortified with some working faith. But whatever be the relationship between the part and the whole, the specialistic, detached, or isolated attitude cannot be regarded as permanent. The attitude that is based upon one’s special interests and knowledge cannot be complete. One’s special study consciously or unconsciously soon tends to affect other portions of one’s world of thought. There is some adjustment between the smaller group of thought and the entire body, unless, indeed, there is an obsession equally injurious to the individual and his cause. Few are so wrapped up that they are drawn away from the realities of life, and every one knows of experts (in sociology, economics, biology, etc.) who have their own convictions of the bearing of their particular study upon the welfare of mankind. The tendency to unify, to form a synthesis, and to gain harmony

is irresistible ; and if, on the one hand, a man's special study influences his general ideas, the ordinary man in turn is often disposed to have an unflattering estimate of specialists (in spite of the benefits he has gained from them), and to demand that the specialist should manifest his utility to society. The specialist, like the strong individualist, or the narrow, selfish politician, will see the world from some detached and specialistic point of view, while the larger world is apt to become impatient of those points of view that do not embrace the manifold interests of the larger environment.

Specialism and synthesis. — The two tendencies — one, the specialistic, progressive, and radical, the other, the more general, less progressive, and conservative — have each their measure of truth, and they serve to illuminate the relationship between any individual and the environment, between any part and the whole. Towards the reconciliation of the two modern research seems to be tending. A more human interest has appeared, there is a greater tendency to join the scattered threads, to seek to gain equilibrium, and to unify all the phenomena of life, As apart from the continuous endeavour to synthesize in one's own special study, it would seem that special studies are converging more and more nearly one to another, they at least appear to be reaching the point where their implications are more extensive. This affects both the outlook of the specialist and the general world of thought, and it is useful to consider the significance of the tendencies. If we look back upon the history of thought, it is obvious that there was once a time when the amount of divergence must have been exceedingly small. The factors that make for variation of ideas were wanting, and, as we repeatedly see in primitive or rudimentary societies, a certain oneness of all thought is characteristic of the lower levels. Starting as we must with groups, and not with isolated individuals, we can conceive a stage in

development when the contents of minds were quantitatively very small and closely interrelated. Even in the Middle Ages the amount of variation is relatively insignificant when compared with the present age, and consequently we may ask how we are to regard the present highly specialized, disparate, but not entirely disconnected tendencies of thought.

Equilibrium of thought.—When equilibrium is disturbed by variation and conflict of ideas it is not unnatural for the individual to give a whole-hearted adhesion to what appears to offer relief. Disquieting intellectual unrest may break down the patient efforts of the detached individual, and there may be a reaction ; some source of relief may be blindly adopted even though this bring a less active spirit of enquiry. Intellectual unrest has induced men to join a religious community where free individualistic enquiry was not desired, and where the intelligence of the individual was subordinated to a visible body that directed and guided the course of his activity. Again, when conflicting groups of ideas or bodies of thought are fighting for recognition, it often happens that one is chosen in its entirety to the exclusion of the others ; the measure of truth formerly recognized in the others is forgotten or ignored. In political and religious history there have been two parties, neither entirely in the right or in the wrong, but victory has often been followed by bigotry, persecution, and despotism, because the one would not or did not recognize the measure of good in the other. Those who fight for the freedom of thought may end by tyrannical behaviour to those who are not of their way of thinking, and the progressive individual, when he has gained his way, thus may become dogmatic and a foe to further progress. One recalls Cromwell's words on Toleration : " Every sect saith : Oh, give me liberty ! But give him it, and, to his power, he will not yield it to anybody else." It is

the good fortune of pure research that it may profit from all parties and can afford to regard all with toleration.

The ideal equilibrium.—The desire to gain equilibrium in one's own world of thought and the satisfaction and peace which result are features to be noticed carefully, because although an individual may gain some harmony in his special study and his more general outlook, the fact that there are so many interrelated departments of specialized thought, and that all are at an incomplete stage, proves that we can conceive a more real harmony and equilibrium. All these departments—economics, sociology, religion, biology—have a right to work out their own development, and, on analogy, they would contribute to a more ideal equilibrium. Any one who pursues a special path, and is thus more deliberately testing and ordering ideas in one part of his total world of thought, has to recognize that the rest of his psychical world is being treated or admits of being treated in a specialistic manner by others. In other words, we may have consciously striven to formulate our ideas in one department in accordance with the best knowledge, but the rest of our psychical possession may grow up and be accepted without criticism and without any effort to order it in the light of other branches of knowledge. Thus we can very easily conceive the possibility of a fuller, completer, and better standpoint than the one we possess to-day.

The psychical equilibrium of the individual.—If the absence of harmony between the smaller and the larger world of life causes unrest, when there is harmony the result will naturally bring peace to the individual. In any progressive individual the development from his youthful world of thought through periods of detached enquiry, disequilibrium, and often unrest, to a new stage of coherence, reconciliation, and harmony is very instructive. It issues in a new era in the development of *his* consciousness ; it brings *him* contentment and satisfac-

tion, it gives cohesion to *his* activities. But at the same time it has certain detrimental aspects. It can be detrimental to the continued progress of knowledge in so far as he is brought to a state of mind which may make him somewhat unsympathetic towards those who have not yet arrived at their own stage of equilibrium. In his state of mind there is a balance, a unity, a mutual adjustment ; when things are unified and in proportion his general outlook or position is a harmonious part of himself.¹ It is a state which concerns himself alone. It gives strength to him, and his attitude is likely to be arrogant and coercive when the conclusions arising from his more careful, more ordered reflexion have become inextricably bound up with his whole world of thought and feeling, so that his entire outlook seems to him to be founded upon knowledge as solid as his knowledge of his special field. Men of all walks of life will commonly fuse into one mass that which has been based upon sound tested data together with that which though untested by themselves yet admits of being more carefully and critically handled.

The specialist and ordinary knowledge.—Everybody knows the readiness of people to defer to the opinion of any one who has a stock of tested knowledge in any special field. But when men go further and assume that his opinion is equally valuable in other points, this is as hazardous as to go to the other extreme and mistrust a specialist simply because he is a specialist. The behaviour is at least instructive in illustrating our infirmities of thought—the ease with which we associate the specialistic and the general body of thought and blindly accept or reject the whole *en bloc*. The specialist or expert, with his trained knowledge in some one branch of thought,

¹ The meaning may be made more clear by considering the opposite—a failure to harmonize one's ideas of (say) a Beneficent Deity with one's views of evil and suffering in man or in the lower orders.

may or may not be equally sound in other branches ; this is a question for discrimination and further enquiry. Our usual vague generalizations accord with our spatial and structural ideas of thought, which make us confuse the part with the whole ; and while they facilitate some sort of judgment, they offer no ground for sound judgments. Two courses lie open—to eliminate the wrong arguments and search for more secure criteria *or* to abandon the task as hopeless. Only the former leads to mental or physical development. Now, the specialist or expert usually appeals only to the few ; the wider he casts his net, the larger his appeal. At the same time, other specialists will often look with some mistrust upon that work which goes outside the immediate problems *as they conceive them*. While Darwin appealed to specialists, Herbert Spencer may be cited as a scholar who appealed to a wider field, and presented a wider outlook. In this case, while the former was admittedly a master in his field, it may be questioned whether the latter, in spite of his acumen and range, is now regarded as a master save in those departments in which the disciple is not competent to judge.¹ Darwin left it for the environment to test and adjust his more specialized work ; Spencer seems to have aimed at the more ambitious task of giving the environment a new body of thought.²

Specialism and progress.—In general there is apt to be a suspicion of the man who ventures outside what *we* consider to be his special field, who embarks upon subjects which *we* hold to be irrelevant. We talk of the cobbler sticking to his last. But, strangely enough, we have in mind everybody except ourselves. In mistrusting the man who goes outside his field—*i.e.* our conception of what *his* field must be—we implicitly (or explicitly)

¹ See F. C. S. Schiller, *Ency. Brit.*, art. "Spencer," vol. xxv. p. 635 (col. i., middle).

² See above, p. 60, n. 2, and contrast Robertson Smith, above, p. 65 *seq.*

limit his functions, interests, and ability. On the other hand, our human nature does not impel *us* to limit ourselves to those things wherein *we* may perhaps be supposed to have some competent and tested knowledge. The fact that our judgments, opinions, and activities so invariably involve matters of which we have not the expert knowledge possessed by others clearly shows that we normally and tacitly regard our tested and untested knowledge as a whole or unit. We claim to tell when the cobbler is not sticking to his last, but we usually do not distinguish between our specialistic and our non-specialistic attainments. Our ordinary standpoint, therefore, is subjectively whole, entire, inseparable ; but, viewed objectively, it is imperfect, incomplete, and fragmentary ; our psychical development is still an active process, and our psychical realm contains large tracts which are being specialistically treated by others. Consequently, the man who is specialistic in a single department may be a bar to progress because he is apt to overlook the importance of other special studies. His own convictions are the more intense when he associates them with his trained knowledge, and although he may realize that his own energy has brought him to this stage, and although he may recognize in some special field the need for other men of diverse types and tendencies, he may forget that it takes all kinds of people to make a world. The desire to promulgate and proselytize is characteristic of all men with strong convictions based on experience and knowledge, and they can be intolerant of others. In research, social reform, and religion, there is a stage of development, born of an intense feeling of the completest equilibrium or harmony in one's world of thought that can manifest itself in impatience towards or in a provoking superiority over those who differ. Yet one must not deny to others that sense of harmony that has been gained by one's own efforts along one's own lines ; and since the whole world of thought

could be theoretically divided into numerous departments, the ideal in view is a harmonious adjustment of them all.

Ideally complete thought.—If we tried to conceive an ideal completeness of thought, we should have, not an aggregate of specialists each with his large area of non-specialized thought—and this is very much the position in the world of thought to-day—but a state where every special department of thought would have influenced and would have been influenced by the others, and, if we were to try to imagine a progressive individual, whose whole world of thought was in harmony with the advances made in every special department, what need would he feel for any further intellectual pursuit? If in any special department there were any conflicting views, he would not reach the ideal state of completeness until one of them had finally superseded its rivals. But if so, this department would be complete, as also would be all ancillary studies. The ideal completeness ultimately involves that of every department of thought and of every individual concerned in it ; it would result in an intellectual or psychical harmony between a man and his fellows ; all would have reached the same ideal state, and there would be no problems and difficulties in life calling for special enquiry. The individual would be psychically one with his environment. Naturally we of to-day cannot conceive such a state of ideal completeness and adjustment in the total world of thought, but adjustment is continually going on as though this ideal were the far-off goal. In some such way as this we may perhaps realize the difference between, on the one hand, any individual who is making adjustments in his world of thought and gaining a more unified and more coherent outlook irrespective of the state of knowledge, and, on the other, a state of absolute coherence and equilibrium in the thought of the world in which he lived. It is the difference between

the ordinary progressive individual and the ideal Perfect, Absolute, and Complete Mind.

The near and the remote future.—If we were to trace back the individual to his early years before he began to assimilate any knowledge, we should reach a consciousness into which we cannot project ourselves. We cannot comprehend what our own consciousness was when we were young. Each and every individual comes in between a state of consciousness in his babyhood and childhood which he cannot recall in order to understand it, and a future which is also outside his comprehension ; and as he grows in knowledge, there is a development of consciousness and conflict of ideas.¹ In the development of mankind, too, we come between a stage so rudimentary, so primitive, that there can hardly have been any initial divergence of thought, and an Unknown where, if there be absolute harmony of knowledge and thought, would there not be stagnation ? As an alternative to this climax, it is more natural to suppose some further development of consciousness which, however, we can as little conceive as the child can conceive his manhood, or as primitive man could foresee the thought of the present age. And it is precisely a further development of consciousness that is suggested both by the study of religions and by the evolution theory itself. For, strictly speaking, we cannot begin our survey of consciousness with the child or with primitive man ; there is the problem of consciousness in the organic world outside man, the response to stimuli, the adaptive instinct of animals, and the resemblance of the consciousness in the lower orders of all life—animal or plant—to that in the individual man and his race. Everywhere the consciousness, the psychical

¹ By the growth or development of consciousness is meant the psychical growth or development of the individual ; it is a convenient way of thinking of mental progress—just as we speak of the dawn and growth of love—but it is not to be supposed that the consciousness is an actual physical entity, any more than love is.

ability, is normally suitable for coping with the normal environment. We stand between the unknown origin of consciousness and rudimentary types, and a distant and unknown future, the *immediate* phases of which future are obviously being shaped by the progress of thought and knowledge to-day. This is enough to show us that there is an important difference between the present environment with its existing and impending conditions, and the more remote stages to which these will be the prelude. The usual tendency is to make an adjustment between one's special interests and everyday life, to work towards some comprehensive synthesis whereby to shape one's life, to replace the disparities of experience by some unified system. One's immediate duty may be with the present and impending conditions, but, for the reasons already given (p. 87), in seeking to unify and synthesize for one's own contentment and equilibrium—whether in reconstructing religion or in any other reform—it is only too easy to ignore the importance of departments of thought or aspects of life which have a claim to attention. So valuable have specialistic studies proved in the past that no one of them can be condemned or ignored because it appears to have no practical bearing upon modern life. But just as the individual in reaching a certain stage can be unsympathetic, towards or intolerant of positions or outlooks very different from his own, so intellectual unrest over a wider area may find an outlook so full of peace and promise that the advance of specialized and detached research may be hindered. The age will have found its equilibrium, but the growth of knowledge which gives greater fulness to experience may run the risk of being cramped as it once had been.

Individualism in thought.—In dealing with the relation between the more specialized and the less specialized thought we touch the relationship between different types of mind or psychological levels, and it will now

be seen that the ideal attitude is that which recognizes the incompleteness of our own outlook, and can have a sympathy for one which, whatever we may think of it, may contribute to a greater fulness in the future. What contributes to progress of knowledge in any special field is the combination or group of individual workers, each with his own individualistic way of looking at things. The sum of them gives a more comprehensive outlook than that of any single one. All would hold much in common but no two would subscribe to precisely the same body of opinions. However, all would be in agreement as against those who were opposed to them, and their general attitude or spirit would be in harmony and quite distinct from that of their opponents. If we could imagine them forced to combine against some attack, we should find that the smaller differences among them would be sunk; and though individuals on both sides might previously have shared much in common, the differences between the two parties would now become more acute. At the same time, the freedom upon which progress had hitherto depended would now be hampered. The free development of the individual would be hindered by the necessity of a consistent adhesion to the platform or programme of his party. Knowledge grows when there is room for differences, and not when men, banded together to attack or to resist attack, must have a larger measure of agreement among themselves than had hitherto been necessary. So, too, religion and religious thought have progressed when there has been room for individual differences, and when the effort has been made to steer a course between excessive individualism, heterogeneity, and anarchy, on the one side, and, on the other, excessive homogeneity and antipathy to all variation of opinion.

Specialism and other psychological levels.—When thought works itself out along its own course it develops, provided there are sufficient interest and sufficient opposi-

tion and competition to stimulate it. When specialized thought comes more boldly into the larger field of life it readily suffers, since the necessity of clear and definite statement or of clothing the dry bones in popular dress may cheapen, degrade, or stereotype it. Most people have a respect for that which is not outside the intelligence, but on the border or fringe as it were, and typical stories illustrate the enchantment of sermons, addresses, and lectures which are not too difficult to understand, but sufficiently above the ordinary mental level to be attractive. The difference in "psychical levels" here seems to play a very important part (see above, p. 25). A thing that is too remote may be ignored; whereas, if there is a particular relationship between it and a mind, it can exercise a glamour and a fascination, and can stimulate. On the other hand, if it be on the same dead level with that mind, there is no "psychical stimulus," it runs the risk of being ignored or treated with that familiarity which is next door to contempt. The significance of the difference between two "psychical levels" is illustrated in ordinary human relationships. One may notice the teacher and his class. The teacher may be too much above the heads of his class, he may be too much on a level with them, or he may be able to find just the relationship necessary for producing the best results.¹

Exemplified in research and in religion.—The ordinary man may have a vague respect for a study clothed in technical language, but when it is along lines which he can thoroughly understand he is apt to consider himself to be as competent as the trained enquirer. Such subjects as history, religion, and the Bible are disciplines; but they are precisely the subjects at which ordinary individuals will often feel themselves as competent as the

¹ The effect of "psychical intercourse" when most successful is to induce a sort of natural and spontaneous development of the minds in question. The fact that one has actively influenced the other is hardly felt, if at all.

learned. And the great advantage of this is the fact that specialistic enquiry is prevented from being too narrow ; it is open to the unceasing criticism of minds which in one or more particulars will be as valuable as, if not more so than, those that rank as " experts." For example, the specialist may tend to overlook facts of human nature, but the ordinary man—our evidence for the psychological and expert study of human nature—here has a right to be heard. On the other hand, technical and scientific studies which are not immediately intelligible suffer because they will sometimes be accepted *en bloc*, and sometimes rejected with equal thoroughness. Thus it is that the two opposing attitudes to Science, the one of blind, irrational admiration, the other of blank ignorance and indifference, are, so far as they go, somewhat injurious for the welfare of the subject. To take another illustration, a valuable work, like John Spencer's ritual laws of the Hebrews, may have been just the one to stimulate research, but, not being in touch with the environment to which it appealed, it was ignored (see above, p. 39). Yet again, with men like Darwin, Wellhausen, Robertson Smith, and many another, the proper relationship has been found ; the man and the age or the environment fit each other, the soil is already prepared and the ideas fructify ; there is a need, a conscious or unconscious desire, and it is answered. It is not otherwise in the development of the consciousness of the individual, when he reaches a stage where he is ripe for some influence which exactly corresponds to his requirements ; indeed at this point a pursuit, a book, or an idea, or something which was not an entire novelty to him, now and only now fits in with and stimulates his psychical growth.¹ All this bears on the question of the individual

¹ It will be noticed that in such cases any sudden active movement in the psychical development of the individual will be due, not to him alone, but to his environment. The " leap " in his evolution is the more striking as we fix our attention upon him, and ignore the greater whole

and the group; in writing a book, making a speech, teaching a class, inaugurating a reform, or reconstructing religion—everywhere it is a question of the relationship between different “psychical levels,” between different standpoints and attitudes. How instructive this feature is for the study of religions is obvious, if it be recognized that the problem of this relationship has existed ever since there was an upward movement of thought in human history—that is, ever since an individual diverged from the environment and was able to move it. It is especially interesting to notice the bearing of the same problem upon conceptions of a Deity. The Deity has been regarded as an immanent and transcendent Being, as a Mind not entirely removed from our own, but transcendent. But the idea of a Deity has also been so formulated that it has come to be out of touch with the average level of thought; and in this case the Deity has been regarded with a vague awe, or has become so remote that He has no longer held a place in popular ideas.¹ In like manner, conceptions of religion when no longer in touch with the environment have tended to become isolated, or when they have been brought down to the level of the environment they have lost their value. These fluctuations in the course of the movement of thought throw much light upon the vicissitudes of religion; the vicissitudes may be largely ascribed to the conflict between the more specialized and the less

of which he is part. And this may apply also to the apparent leaps and discontinuities in organic evolution; the narrower our horizon, the more remarkable will they appear. See pp. 63, n. 1, 77, n. 1, 107.

¹ It is worth pointing out incidentally that the error underlying the idea of the “remote Deity” is due to a confusion between the conceptions and their sources—the conceptions of a Deity are concerned with thought and the environment, but the sources, *i.e.*, the psychical facts they are intended to express, take us to the experiences of the consciousness of individuals. The ideas of a Deity may be out of harmony with other ideas, but, psychologically speaking, they represent the experiences of men expressed in accordance with the thoughts and knowledge of their environment. See Chapter V. *seq.*

specialized psychical levels, between the 'more reflective and the less reflective minds.

All parts of a whole are indispensable.—Now, if we were to direct our attention to the career of some body of thought, we should have, first, a small number of famous names, landmarks in its history, great leaders whose fame will long be remembered. But we should also find a vast amount of less conspicuous work by men whose achievements were less impressive, and perhaps could only be appreciated by the few. Again, there would be the popularizers, men who possessed the gift of making recondite subjects easily intelligible to the many, and, not to mention other classes, it would be only too easy to point to many learned, elaborate, and voluminous works, marked often enough by some crudeness, eccentricity, or extremeness, works which appear to lie quite outside the line of advance. Laborious discussions, far-reaching and often preposterous theories, sweeping conclusions, in which no doubt there was often much of real and lasting value, have failed to survive. There is a something very pathetic, tragic, and perverse in those works that now often seem to be mere rubbish, although they must represent the labour of many years and the expenditure of much money—both of which, it is easy to imagine, might have been more profitably employed for the furtherance of those schemes in which *we* are interested. But this is a wrong judgment, based upon subjective and arbitrary ideas of value. We may be sure that these now antiquated workers were as convinced of the soundness, merits, and utility of their labours as we of to-day are of ours—this is the only postulate, and a very fair one. And if they pursued their endeavours according to their own lights—strangely prismatic though *we* may think them—they were working out their own individual development as surely as their successors, we and our contemporaries of to-day, are doing. If any one will patiently and impartially consider the

history of any subject which he has made his own, and if he will attend not merely to the prominent names, but also to those who are less or little known, and to the poor failures, he will surely discover that his study is indebted for its continuation to the rank and file as much as to the leaders. Any study, any political or other "party," any group of members united by common interests, in fact anything that can be viewed as a whole is indebted to all its parts.

Genius and the environment.—The honour we do those who have left their mark is a tribute not merely to men of genius, but to the more ordinary individuals who caught the appeal. Men of genius are so regarded because their merits have been recognised.¹ All who diverge from the current environment excite attention, and not rarely has it been difficult to know at first how to regard them. But the great men of old whom we appreciate have not only excited attention, they have also continued to appeal to successive generations. Indeed, the recognition of their worth not rarely presupposes a certain psychical development in ourselves; for not every one will recognize the value of an Isaiah, a Socrates, or a Shakespeare. The recognition is an implicit "psychical relationship" between our consciousness and them, and when we perceive how some names disappear in course of time while others are retained, it is evident that we are not dealing with mechanical vicissitudes but with the active consciousness of men who reject this and cling to that. If such names as Plato, Shakespeare, and many another mean much to us, it is not because of some impassable gulf separating them from us. We do not worship them from afar. Rather is it that there is a certain relationship

¹ It has somewhere been quite gravely suggested that men of genius should be discovered early and trained. In history the genius has forced his way and made his mark, he has not been foisted upon an expectant public.

between them and us, they answer and appeal to some better or higher part of ourselves. Our great men are an integral part of that of which we feel ourselves to be part; and the recognition of men of genius is the recognition of men like unto ourselves though with higher endowments. The recognition involves a development within ourselves; the process is not a passive one as regards ourselves.

Failure and free-will.—If we turn from the great men in any field of study to the particular environment in which their work lay, we notice that the rank and file have often played a part in collecting or discussing material. They have furthered the work of the famous, though they colour it with their own idiosyncrasies; and even though they may have been guilty of extravagances, they have forced attention along lines which under more sober guidance have led to valuable results. Some have made errors so glaring that they will not be repeated; they have provoked an opposition which has stimulated a keener enquiry. All, both small and great, have played a part in the movement of the study; they have been working out their own development, and they illustrate the significance of Free-will in the world of research. Furthermore, we may note that not even the most egregious failures have permanently impeded the progress of the study. We cannot conceive, and it would be futile to ask, what would be the history or the thought of the present age had there not been the leading lights whom we all honour or had those lesser luminaries proceeded otherwise than they did. Yet may we see that the movement of thought has a fuller significance when we realize that each and every individual involved has been a factor in its progress. Whatever be the conditions in any modern aspect of life or department of thought, they are due to the efforts of all the individuals directly and indirectly concerned, and these conditions have arisen

not from any conscious co-operation, but from the desire of each to do what seemed fit and proper.

Collective thought as the arbiter.—That life and thought have advanced in spite of eccentricities, examples of extremeness, and other too individualistic traits is a fact that gives us the idea of a directive centre of control. There is an average thought which adjusts, moderates, and tempers. The individualistic developments are stimulating and disturbing; but if every individual became extreme, either the average thought could once more be viewed as a collective whole, or the disparity would be so great that we could not speak of it as in any way a unit. A study viewed collectively has—like any environment—a more comprehensive outlook than any one of the individuals.¹ It moves through the impetus they give, but it guides, tempers, and moderates by its insistence upon aspects which each detached individual overlooks or ignores. It selects and assimilates what is good in the individual and sets it upon a broader basis. The individual who falls below its level, or who brings nothing new, has no part in its movement, and he who would disturb it too seriously cannot be tolerated by the environment for its own safety. If at times it moves quickly, and apparently in an extreme direction, it is usually slow and relatively conservative. Now, the collective body of thought may sometimes seem to misjudge the individual. He may be along right lines but ahead of his age, or he may represent too extreme a type of what in more moderate a form would have been appreciated. Moreover, when the environment reaches the stage where his merits can at length be recognized it does not follow that he now becomes of immediate value.

¹ More strictly, it possesses an aggregate of different outlooks; the true comprehensive outlook that does justice to the various individuals is an ideal (see p. 90). But for facility of thought we may regard the environment and the study as units.

The general movement may have been such that he would need reinterpretation or readjustment to the later stage of thought. Consider, for example, old John Spencer, ahead of his age in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and two hundred years later recognized by Robertson Smith as the founder of "the science of Comparative Religion," and by far the most important writer on his subject (p. 39). Under happier conditions, Spencer might have given a different course to the study, but this lies outside enquiry; we have only the fact that there was a succession of stages of a somewhat experimental character until in Robertson Smith we have an entirely independent combination of some old methods and old evidence with the results of more recent research. We can clearly see that to return to John Spencer's total position would have been suicidal, or rather, it would have been impossible, because his position was bound up with a great body of thought belonging to other conditions.¹ Instead of a "return" to Spencer we have an "advance" to a better and stronger position.

Past error and imperfection.—If Spencer was ahead of his age and was ignored, what must be said of those who were recognized, who exercised influence, but afterwards proved to be wrong? Is it not a fact that the environment profits from the errors and faults it discovers in itself? A wrong theory cannot enable knowledge to make an immediate advance, but it often leads to a collection of data upon which may subsequently be founded a theory of more value. In this way "good" has often come out of "evil"; in other words, what seemed justifiable, adequate, or legitimate has later been

¹ So too it would be impossible to "return" to Kant, or to Plato, or to Primitive Christianity, because they are inextricably interwoven with *all* the conditions and circumstances of their time. It is quite another question how one may best distinguish the features that belong solely to some past stage from those that can be taken and applied to modern conditions.

denounced; yet not only has it served some useful purpose, but the very fact that a new attitude is taken is an indication of subsequent progress. All recognition of error and sin is dynamic. What to us may seem erroneous, harmful, and wrong was often regarded otherwise in other conditions. The error or evil is our fresh estimate of it; we have outgrown, and often we have benefited from the conditions or circumstances which we now repudiate. We do right to recognize all error, but we cannot conceal the fact that the faults and imperfections we see in past stages have often served a beneficial purpose in a development whereby we ourselves profit. In the history of research, earlier stages are sometimes recognized to have been sadly imperfect, but it is a mistake to assume, as is sometimes done, that the present stage *must* therefore be erroneous. This is to misunderstand the nature of the development of thought.

Imperfect stages in research. — Often the earlier stage could not conceivably have grappled with the very difficult conditions that have grown up subsequently. If we take Darwinism and the recent developments of Mendelism, we may ask whether an earlier recognition of Mendel's work (see p. 40) would not have been all for the good of biological science. On the other hand, this might have confused the work of Darwinism, and events have perhaps proved that the step taken by Darwin prepared the way for the special problems which Mendelism brings. It may suffice to quote the weighty opinion of William Bateson: "When we reflect on the intricacies of genetic problems as we must now conceive them there come moments when we feel almost thankful that the Mendelian principles were unknown to Darwin. The time called for a bold pronouncement, and he made it, to our lasting profit and delight. With fuller knowledge we pass once more into a period of cautious expectation and

reserve.”¹ It is useful to compare the experience of Old Testament criticism. The stage inaugurated by Wellhausen in 1878 belongs to a period when the amount of reliable evidence from external sources was relatively small. The more recent accumulation of Assyriological and other external data has brought a great deal of confusion into the study, because, while some scholars recognize that the position which is owed to Wellhausen needs some readjustment, there are others who would reject it in its entirety.² Now, it is pretty certain that this position would not have been inaugurated unless it had been based upon the Old Testament alone, and the diverse tendencies of to-day allow the conviction that unless we had it, even with its imperfections, the present state of Old Testament research would be absolutely incoherent. The position inaugurated in 1878 is imperfect because of the subsequent progress in the world of research; but unless there were this position, with all its advantages and disadvantages, it is quite impossible to see how research could have been concentrated and directed as it has been.

The development of such stages.—Here we may observe the way in which different individuals “see” a position, since, although some regard the Wellhausen theory as a structure now to be “overthrown,” others can sever the more permanent elements from those which belong properly to the conditions at or before the year 1878. The latter are they who agree that the only hope of dealing with the Old Testament problems, as they now present themselves, lies in a further development of a position which, in certain respects, may be regarded as inadequate. They find no value in the theories proposed by their opponents. They aim at a further development

¹ *Darwin and Modern Science* (ed. A. C. Seward, Cambridge, 1909), p. 96.

² See also above, pp. 57 *sqq.*, 115, 118.

of a position which, though imperfect, proves itself sounder, and offers a more fruitful line of advance, than any other. In the world of research, as in all serious thought, men do not throw away an hypothesis whenever it is seen to stand in need of some restatement, reformulation, or modification; an outlook, a position, or a view of life that has proved serviceable is not lightly renounced because it is imperfect, especially when no alternative as satisfying and as comprehensive has presented itself. In every development of successive stages of thought there are similar psychological features. Modern Old Testament critics stand to "Wellhausenism" in much the same way as Darwin's disciples to Darwinism, and the facts are the more suggestive when we are concerned with such problems as the relation between Mohammedanism and Mohammed and the Koran, between Judaism and the Old Testament and the Talmud, and between Christianity and the Bible and the early Church.

Summary.—A survey of the movement of thought gives us the idea of "collective thought" in an environment. It moves slowly and irresistibly, it is entirely indebted to all the constituent individuals, but it tempers and moderates their too individualistic or extreme contributions. The individual in the course of his few decades will be working out his own development, but he may be viewed as merely a part of a collective area, more powerful and certainly more comprehensive than himself. The most helpful individuals have been those from whom the environment has benefited most; but the most prominent and the most inconspicuous, the most successful and the most preposterous, are jointly responsible for the conditions that have followed upon their activities. Whether or no grave errors have been of prolonged disastrous effect, they have at all events given a greater fulness to the field, and all discovery of error is an indication of later development in so far as what we call error was not so regarded

at the time. We commonly assume that our opponents accept, support, or reject beliefs and ideas in a manner far less rational and intelligent than we ourselves do. Our own standpoint or position usually seems eminently reasonable, whereas that of our opponent often seems rationally or intellectually inferior. On the other hand, we all tend to merge into one whole our tested knowledge where we may be, to some extent, "experts" or "specialists," as it were, and the great mass of knowledge and ideas that have never been tested by us. This "whole" actuates us. We all have ideas and beliefs that mean so much to us that we cannot tolerate aught that seems to disturb their equilibrium; yet it is usually very difficult to realize that others are similarly constituted. In fighting for or against some idea, the contest is for some personal value, some aspect of our self, and not for some purely intellectual doctrine; it is often a fight, as it were, for preservation of our self or personality. None the less, our own life history shows us that we undergo development and that our most cherished, intimate, and personal ideas can be viewed objectively by ourselves, and can even be modified. But this development is not abrupt or discontinuous, and when we study the progress of thought, the most significant novelties (*e.g.* Darwinism) prove on closer investigation to be neither casual nor sudden, neither entirely new nor unexpected.

Orderliness of development.—Every one is acquainted with types of mind that grow and develop along the same line in contrast to those that undergo significant changes at some period or another. The former are obvious examples of orderly development; the minds are not static or stationary, they may be keen and brilliant, but there are not those crises and mutations that appear to be the antithesis of orderly genetic development. Now when we consider the world of

thought it becomes clear that movement has been caused by those who actually underwent significant changes. If men did not change from one side to another in the history of thought, would there have been those vicissitudes which go to make up history? For example, we of to-day are indebted to those who accepted Darwinism and Wellhausenism. But they did not grow up in an environment already prepared to accept these. On the contrary, the acceptance often involved a revolution in their life-history, and provoked opposition and hostility in their environment. In other words, although the study of history may reveal a "genetic" sequence of circumstances, conditions, and states, there are innumerable vicissitudes due to individuals who do not appear to be examples of a genetic development. The appearance in thought of a sudden change, of some conspicuous phenomenon (*e.g.* the French Revolution), finds some explanation when we study the whole context of conditions at and before the time; and in like manner it may well be the case that the same apparent abruptness in an individual would become more intelligible could we know the exact character of his consciousness. But unfortunately neither the observer nor the individual himself can know this. On the other hand, when individuals undergo significant developments, or pass from one side to the other, it will very often be found that the event itself is only part of a series of interconnected events, part of a larger context of factors. In the case of conversion, one of the most conspicuous events in the individual's history, not only is there an obvious interconnexion between the individual's psychical life before and after, but the act of conversion seems often to be only the climax of a preliminary period of unrest. The outstanding event tends to obscure the interrelation between the before and after, but this very interrelation makes it the more probable that the event, however striking it may appear,

finds its explanation in the whole context of conditions which already existed and of which only a part had been recognized. For it must not be forgotten that where we speak of development or evolution we are referring not to wholes, but to parts of wholes. Nature here comes to our service, for nothing can be more unlike than the tadpole and the frog, or the caterpillar and the butterfly; yet the unity underlying the development and superficial unlikeness leads us to grasp the idea of an orderly psychical development underlying manifest differences and apparently abrupt changes. And just as in nature we cannot sever the creature from its environment, so in the psychical realm the clue to the mysteries of development in the individual may be sought in that psychical whole of which he is part; cf. p. 95, note 1.

Combination of new and old.—When we look back upon the history of knowledge it seems as though the environment rejected alchemy and retained chemistry, it repudiated astrology but fostered astronomy (see p. 74). Our language invariably tends to objectify and to regard as distinct and different “bodies” what might more suggestively be regarded as two stages in the growth of interconnected data. Chemistry grew out of alchemy, astronomy out of astrology, but although the environment will reject what it does not retain, the change is not absolute. Some of the old will persist, just as, in geographical studies, in spite of new data room was found, for a time, for the antiquated theories of Ptolemy and Strabo. This persistence is usually *bona fide* and natural. Arrest a body of thought at any moment, and there will be found some features or tendencies which will subsequently be cast out, or will remain as “survivals,” while others are to prove extremely valuable. But wherever there is a movement away from the general position or from the environment, who is to say whether it is advancing it or impeding it? We may certainly find

cases where an accurate judgment could be given, but there will be a percentage of important cases where only time can show what the final estimate must be, and then there may be such an interconnexion of results that the need for a final estimate will scarcely be felt.¹ The most extreme tendencies in the past course of a study can stamp the whole: what was once abnormal becomes normal; but it is quite as true that the abnormal has perished and has been of only indirect value. The non-normal becomes now normal and now abnormal. While movement of thought is indebted to the independent, detached, original, and progressive minds there can be no *a priori* assumption that these will be directly beneficial. All individualistic enterprise runs risks, but the risks are often taken unconsciously; the slow-moving environment is the arbiter.²

Movement is experimental.—In all life and thought we may be sure that the man who is conscientiously following out his bent, in response to that psychical force that leads all men along new paths, has his reward, even though it is not his environment that recognizes what it owes to him. We must distinguish between the judgment of the existing environment and that based upon a fuller knowledge than the environment possesses or upon a sympathy which it cannot afford. Life and thought would come to a standstill if it were influenced—in some way which one cannot conceive—by the idea that an individual who was regarded as isolated or extreme must

¹ An unbiased estimate of the question whether the Norman Conquest was or was not beneficial could be given now; but touching the French Revolution, the last Budget, and innumerable other movements there would be no unanimity of opinion. So if we look back in our personal history it is easy to distinguish between the unambiguous events (good or bad), and those that are at present doubtful or neutral.

² We usually emphasize only the movements that succeeded; as for those that failed—of course they failed! But the failures are of the greatest importance, because they furnish valuable evidence for the study of the individual and his environment (see pp. 355 *sqq.*).

be tolerated and not opposed, on the chance that the future might judge differently. And the actual treatment of such an individual is influenced by the existing stage of thought. In ordinary life the experimental nature of our behaviour is apparent. Going to one extreme, opinion has at one time sternly restricted all divergence that seemed harmful, while, at another time, it has gone to another extreme, and has unduly tolerated divergence, and in the latter case it tends to weaken the cohesion of the group.¹ It has happened in the past that individuals who diverged were on the side of the saints but were treated as sinners, and the converse ; but the environment judged according to its lights, instinctively working for its own security. So long as an instinct of collective safety prevails in departments of life and thought there must always be some individuals who will go unrewarded or suffer undeservedly, and others will escape merited disapprobation and punishment. The problem of finding the proper attitude confronts man, and it has been one of the functions of religion to associate the individual with something both kinder and juster than his immediate environment.

The outcome of development.—The fact is, one is obliged to take a more comprehensive view of the significance of psychical development in the individual, in his environment, and in the race. If we were to take a cross-section in the development of a study or of an individual we should recognize tendencies beneficial and detrimental.

¹ Truth is promoted by testing and criticizing views and not by tacitly tolerating them. Defence of toleration is usually as regards particulars ; and the fact that appeal for toleration must usually be made on behalf of sundry particular ideas or proposals is an interesting indication of the tendency of the thought of the environment to be slow-moving, conservative, and comprehensive, and to strike an average between extremes. Absolute toleration would be absolute anarchy, unless the conditions of life and thought in an area were such that the individual could be trusted not to outrage the profound feelings of his environment.

But as a matter of common experience what seems beneficial may subsequently prove detrimental, and the converse. Few realize how much human experience has benefited from the evils of the past, evils, too, which often had not been recognized as such. Now, if our judgments can be so imperfect, it is obvious that we cannot necessarily point to the final stage and estimate the final result of a development.¹ For example, people pass through periods when their mental development moves relatively slowly; and it is only by taking a long view that we see that what at a given time might appear to be an arrest or decline or decay was only a stage in a continuous movement. On this analogy, then, when we see the childishness of old age, or the sad cases of loss of mental power in the closing years of the life of a man of fine intellectual ability, whether we suppose that this is the culminating point or an incident in a longer development depends upon the sort of view we take of life. The difference between crass speculation and legitimate inference lies in this, that in the nature of the case we cannot see beyond a certain stage of development, and cannot speculate, but whenever we can look back upon any development in life, history, or thought we can clearly see how irrational it would have been to point to this or the other of past stages and assert that such and such was a culminating point. If, on the one hand, we cannot actually look forward beyond existing or impending conditions; on the other hand, in looking back, the result of our retrospect compels us to recognize that there must be a point of view longer and more comprehensive than that of the present time or than that we now hold. We are necessarily obliged to form estimates from the

¹ The question may be left untouched whether that which can be said to undergo development or evolution can ever have a final stage! In many typical cases, the final stage, like the initial (p. 81, note 1), unites the "thing" in question with something else that can be regarded as developing, some larger whole of which it is part.

standpoint to which we happen to belong, but this does not exclude the recognition that there must be a standpoint less imperfect than that we have at the present stage of our experience and knowledge. In this way we confirm the common intuition of a superior Intelligent Power whose judgments are immeasurably wiser and juster than ours. This is an intuition that has recurred independently in various forms; for example, an old Babylonian record of the seventh century B.C.—and perhaps much older—asserts: “What seems good to one, to a god may be displeasing, what is spurned by oneself, may find favour with a god.”¹

The consciousness of purpose.—In the life of the ordinary individual, in the educative character of the child’s play, and in the progress of a study, we can see a working for ends which could not be conceived, just as truly as in the lower and simpler forms of organic life there are creatures which do not live to see the results in which their psychical life culminates. “The solitary wasp laboriously drags to her carefully-prepared nest the prey secured by a day’s hunting, and seals it there together with her egg in order that it may serve as food for her offspring which she will never see, and of whose needs or existence she can have no knowledge.”² Everywhere are examples of behaviour which is beneficial, educative, and purposive; yet when some particular outcome is not consciously realized in advance, the behaviour often seems to us to be instinctive, automatic, or mechanical. It is obvious that in the history of research men have been unconsciously working for and contributing to the conditions of to-day; there was a conscious striving for more or less immediate aims which have become part of a larger nexus of circumstances. If this seems mystical, it is a

¹ M. Jastrow, *Religious Belief in Babylonia and Assyria* (1911), p. 333.

² W. M'Dougall, *Psychology*, p. 149. He notes the same unconsciousness of subsequent events in love (*ibid.* p. 151 *seq.*).

simple fact that the current purpose of the child at play is not the purpose which his play serves in training him for the future. The recognition of purpose is a subjective development in the consciousness, and this development often tempts us to regard our own earlier behaviour as more mechanical or blind than it really was. It is necessary to seize the facts and recognize that this advance in consciousness has not yet reached its limit, and that a distinction must assuredly be made between our own aims to-day and some fuller purpose to which they are contributing.

The individual and the Universe.—In conclusion, our conception of the Universe would be hopelessly incomplete if we confined ourselves to the things presented to us by our senses, and refused to consider inferences gained from reflexion upon past vicissitudes.¹ The activity of individuals, or the collective activity of the environment—this, however we are to formulate it (see p. 104), cannot be viewed apart from the fact that the recognizable purposive activities of each and every individual are not to be confused with a larger purpose which only fuller knowledge can appreciate. Our completest and most comprehensive outlook must do justice to the individual, to the group or environment, and to the race. We must not sever any more detached or more progressive part from the more slowly-moving whole. The whole represents the average thought, but it is indebted to minds, each endowed specialistically or departmentally. We can deal with a group statistically, its average height, length of life, and even its general behaviour; but the individual viewed by himself we cannot answer for. Nature cherishes the average; but those too much above or below the average seem to fall

¹ This is not to mention the fact that the things presented by the senses can be interpreted only after a sufficient mental advance has been made; cf. pp. 51 *sqq.*

outside her care. She guards the unconscious, common throng; but she sometimes seems to wipe her hands of those who have grown in fuller consciousness of themselves. And these last are the experimenters, working out their lives more fully, with greater risks and with a greater burden of responsibility. Our conception of the force that makes these men what they are will be sadly fragmentary if we assume that the question of the persistence of some psychical activity of the individual after what we call death lies outside rational enquiry. What is irrational is to ignore the question, because it cannot be conclusively answered. The Study of Religions clearly shows that the prevailing belief—or instinct, if we prefer it—of man has been that the interconnexion of activities which we see around us in everyday life is only one part of a far more profound interconnexion which is not visible to the senses. The individual and the Universe are correlative terms; the former is a part of which the latter is the ultimate whole.¹

¹ From both the biological and the psychological point of view the individual seems to be merely a temporarily detachable part of some larger unit, and that this is so he seems to be intuitively aware. See also the very suggestive study by Julian S. Huxley, *The Individual in the Animal Kingdom* ("The Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature," 1912).

CHAPTER IV

SPECIALISM AND INDIVIDUALISM : II. APPLICATION

The problem of relative superiority.—In studying religions it is frequently necessary to decide between conflicting positions, explanations, theories and the like, and repeatedly it is indispensable that we should be clear in our own mind as to which of any two leading tendencies as regards religion in general is the sounder. As already mentioned, there is a tendency fundamentally sympathetic towards religion, and there is another which is influenced, openly or tacitly, consciously or unconsciously, by the belief that religion is a superstition, doubtless beneficial in the past, possibly ineradicable in the future, but at all events something outside really intellectual thought. Hence, if only as a guide to research, it is necessary to consider the question of the relative superiority of one position over another.

The case of Old Testament criticism.—Consider a complex case such as the development of the criticism of the Old Testament. It has moved by the usual process of selection and rejection, accepting what seemed useful, throwing out what appeared harmful ; throughout the procedure is practical. Criticism could justify itself, as it proceeded, by the claim that its general position enabled it to deal with new data as they arose ; and it could assert that, notwithstanding the vast additions to our knowledge within recent years, the leading hypotheses associated

with the name of Wellhausen had not been confronted with any other rival. On the one hand, it could be truthfully asserted that the present position, even though imperfect, enabled us to cope with situations in a way that no other position would allow. But, on the other hand, there are men of indubitable sincerity who would deny, not merely that this position is imperfect—that may at once be granted—but that it is fundamentally erroneous. So far from the course being one of progressive ascent, they would object that it had been one of continued error, due, according to some, to Wellhausen, according to others, to the German philosopher Hegel, while others again would refer back to the still earlier deism and rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹ Naturally, as we go back—and we must go back at least to the Reformation—the result is to connect too closely the rationalists on the one side and liberal and conservative theologians on the other, and the logical inference would be that the Reformation was the beginning of a gigantic error. And this view is not unknown to those who regard modern Protestantism as thoroughly rationalistic and devoid of any philosophical basis. So close is the interconnexion of thought, so significant the extent to which the less progressive accept or are influenced by the views of the more progressive, that the objection mentioned ultimately affects both parties. If it is alleged that the position of the progressive is bound up with or has been founded upon error, the more this is insisted upon, the more the standpoint of its opponents is weakened, and their own attitude calls for justification.²

The estimation of rival positions.—Now, though

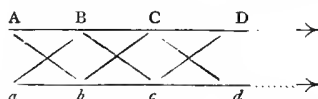
¹ In all argument we represent an opposing position as it appears to us; too often we set up a man-of-straw in order to show how easily the position can be overthrown. The above sentences in the text are based upon "conservative" works and are, it is hoped, a fair statement.

² The only exceptions would be those cases where the two parties had nothing in common (see p. 117, note 1).

it be true that one position may claim to cope with problems more readily than an earlier, if we look back upon past stages, it is obvious that earlier conditions differed to such an extent that we could not expect an older and now superseded stage to deal with the existing conditions. We should not expect Watt's steam-engine to do the work of a modern locomotive. We can only judge a position or stage in the light of the contemporary conditions. This is an important principle, but it is constantly forgotten when, for example, we judge the data of Religion, History, Sociology, or Ethics from the standpoint of our own age. This sort of judgment, it is true, may enable us to perceive the difference between ourselves and past conditions, but it ignores the far more important question, whether our standpoint or position best enables us to deal with existing situations. A past age must be judged in its own light, and the question of absolute progress in the history of thought must not be confused with that of the superiority of one existing position over another. But, here too, when we deal with existing positions, must we not judge from merely one out of a number of possible standpoints, and is not that one which we hold to-day not necessarily a final one? Now, it is not incorrect perhaps to say that in Old Testament study the "critic," as he is called, *i.e.* he who holds the modern critical position, feels that he has "advanced" beyond the earlier stages which are represented by his more conservative, orthodox, or traditional opponents. But the latter often feel that the critics have advanced too far, that there must be a "return," that they are extreme offshoots which have "diverged" too seriously. In any case, although the more conservative occupy a general position which is slowly moving, they will doubtless be quite unable to conceive themselves reaching that position which the critics now hold. Our opponents in political and all other thought are not standing still, but they

certainly do not think they will come to hold *our* position in its entirety! The complex relationships and the processes are commonly felt or expressed in metaphorical language which blinds us to the fact that no progressive movement has ever returned to the entire position of its opponents, and that the less progressive movement, as it continues to proceed, has never attained the precise entire position to which it is opposed.¹ In order to determine which of two or more conflicting theories or hypotheses is soundest, we should have to enquire to the best of our ability which answers the necessary facts, which answers the most relevant facts, and, especially, which can not only be thus justified, but also enables us to explain, understand, or deal with its rivals. If, of a number of rival explanations, theories, or tendencies, L answers the data better than M or N or O, if it covers, more adequately than the others, all the relevant data, and if from L we can also deal with M, N and O, L will deserve the preference, unless, of course, we are led to find a fresh one P which is superior to all. In other words, if we are able to justify our own position, all well and good; but if we can go further, and can understand not only our own position, but also the

¹ If we call the successive rival positions A and a, B and b, C and c, the respective developments A, B, C, etc., and a, b, c, etc., are not isolated; the stage C will be influenced by both AB and ab, and the contemporary stage c by both ab and AB. This may be schematically represented:



Now, adjustment proceeds as though the two lines will ultimately converge; on this equilibrium, see above, p. 90. On the other hand, while the adherents of each "party" will tend to expect the ultimate supremacy of their position over the rival one, in everyday life we have the undoubted fact that the next stage E, whatever it be, will be influenced by the representatives of both lines. In this way every "opposition" plays a prominent and useful part in the history of any movement to which it may be opposed; and consequently although D and d may be opposed, they must have certain features in common, since each has been influenced by its opponents.

strength of one which we consider inferior, we are distinctly better than those who can only see and appreciate their own standpoint. Moreover, by cultivating a certain sympathy for that which we consider inferior, we widen our own outlook, whereas if we remain content with the dogmatic and obstinate assumption that any other standpoint—though genuinely held—is absurd, unscientific, erroneous and the like; we are kept within our own narrow circle. Needless to say, this applies as truly to the cruder rationalist or materialist as to the narrow-minded theologian, or to the dogmatic politician.¹ It is often thought that the best theory, explanation, or position is that which explains the most facts; this is only half true, the best one is that which best explains also the difficulties and objections.²

Temperamental differences.—As for the criticism of the Old Testament,—those who belong to the so-called “critical” school could claim that their position deals with the evidence in a way which the opposing one fails to do, and that the methods were in harmony with those employed in other departments of research. Moreover, they could point out that their opponents themselves employ a criticism of sorts, and that they recognized the validity of the investigation, and entirely accepted certain of the conclusions which at one time no conservative or traditional position would have tolerated. But, quite apart from arguments of this nature, the difference between the two positions proves to be more fundamental, more “constitutional,” as it were. Temperamental differences must

¹ The strongest position is “democratic” in that it pays account to *all* the tendencies throughout the whole field of data which it proposes to cover.

² This is of general application. In all aspects of life and thought the test is not the mere number of adherents, but the attitude to those who are outside. *D* (p. 117, note) may ignore, repudiate, or despise *d*, but the juster its attitude to *d*, the more surely it conduces to a more remote harmony and equilibrium, and, more immediately, to a fresh stage in its own development.

be noticed. The "critics" detach themselves from certain considerations which the more conservative must regard as relevant. Questions appertaining to the New Testament and to Christianity may or may not present themselves to the "critics," but if they do, it is not in the same way that they appear to the minds of the more conservative type. The latter may feel that Old Testament criticism is distinctly antagonistic to particular ideas which they treat as profoundly important. Questions of the supernatural are differently apprehended, and, quite apart from the differences in the bodies of thought in these two opposing types, the more critical type must, in the nature of the case, be more detached. For the progress of Old Testament criticism it has invariably been necessary to view certain data apart from that context which they had in the environment, whether in the thought of the individual or of the group in which he worked.

The detached mind.—For example, the problems of the authorship of the Pentateuch are handled by critics apart from questions of inspiration and the New Testament. But it is obvious that this detachment, however unavoidable and useful, is important for the *contents* of the consciousness of the individual. If a man studies the Old Testament apart from his own religious ideas or those of his environment, his field is in this respect narrower. His "special" study is the Old Testament and not the Old Testament and religion. On the other hand, he whose ideas of the Old Testament and of Christianity remain closely interwoven and who cannot make the necessary detachment, is not making a "special" study of the Old Testament. Both may claim a complete outlook, but each will be imperfect from that point of view which comprises both. The latter is without that knowledge which comes in every advance in Old Testament criticism, the former has yet to make a complete adjustment between his special knowledge and the religious ideas of his environ-

ment. All specialism means concentration and the elimination of what seems irrelevant, and the tendency of markedly specialistic and progressive minds is to reach a position that may seem complete, but does not do justice to those minds who have contributions to make in other directions.

The environment adjusts individual purposes.—Biblical criticism has progressed through the labours of Jews, Roman Catholics, and Protestants, of the non-religious and the anti-religious. Now, if Christians consider that the present results are beneficial, it will be agreed that agnostics, atheists, and all who were distinctly anti-Christian, were not intentionally aiming at this. If, however, they regard the results as harmful, they will allow that those Christians who were stimulated to examine the Bible more keenly and who made discoveries of lasting value, were not purposely conspiring to cause distress to subsequent generations. The results that have actually happened past workers could not foresee ; each was more consciously working upon existing conditions, and more unconsciously helping to shape a more remote future. No one can foresee the precise outcome of progressive movements in life and thought at the present day ; it is only when we look back and perceive the genetic connexion in any series of successive stages that the climax is obvious and often seems almost predetermined or predestined. So, in looking forward, we know only that existing tendencies for good or evil are the true antecedents to some future stage when once more men will look back and see how inevitable the sequence and interconnexion have been. All analogy shows that, whatever be our aims now, we are unconsciously preparing for some less immediate stage, when the purpose of the present will have become part of a larger or newer purpose with a significance we cannot now divine.¹ It would be futile to ask whether

¹ See above, p. III *seq.*

Christian scholars would have acted differently had they foreseen some subsequent tendencies in Biblical study; the outstanding fact is that conscientious activity directed towards recognizable conditions made them work out their own psychical development, the environment did the rest. To apply this more generally, it is necessary as regards existing conditions to justify and improve one's own position in the light of the best knowledge, but it does not follow that this is the position of the future. The more detached or specialistic attitude is necessary for movement, and the conflict between it and the environment is an indication of the absence of adjustment between different psychical levels. The one needs the other, and the general tendency has been for the detached type to contribute to the fuller consciousness of the environment as a whole. But it has by no means been the case that the value of the individual lay precisely just where he thought himself strongest. The markedly individualistic men have not necessarily influenced the age in those respects where they seemed most conspicuous.

Adjustment of earlier ideas.—The path of thought is strewn with broken theories and shattered hypotheses, and our ordinary language shows how naturally we regard thought as some structure (cf. above, p. 55). But, as we know from experience of our own development, beliefs and the like are not annihilated, thrown down, or demolished, rather are they outgrown. What we outgrow is not something that disappears entirely; certain "elements" leave one environment or context and appear in another.¹ So long as there are data to be explained, old explanations may disappear, but new ones will be required. It is the opponent or the man who has not assimilated a body of thought who most readily views it as a structure. The Wellhausen theory of the Old

¹ So, *e.g.*, alchemy and chemistry share certain data in common; above, p. 107.

Testament, for example, is viewed by opponents as an object which can be overthrown or annihilated, whereas those who have assimilated it will agree that it can be perfected but not eliminated. And so too as regards such a body of thought as Darwinism. It is impossible for the scientist to eliminate it, and those who conceive the possibility of the "overthrow" of Darwinism will have in themselves their own bodies of thought which are adjusted and readjusted as surely as those to which they are opposed.

Individuality and personality.—The feeling of the inherent reasonableness of our own attitude often causes us in our impatience with our opponents to assume that they have blindly accepted and swallowed those ideas which we are condemning: it is most difficult to allow with any consistency that people hold or reject ideas for much the same reason that we do—because we honestly believe or disbelieve them. In this way we often unconsciously claim a distinct superiority for ourselves and our way of thinking. But, whether we recognize it or not, our justification of our own position and our condemnation of an opposing one are not purely intellectual procedures. The force that leads men on, and that is a factor in the development of the self, is making us promote not any part of ourselves alone but the whole. It is surely not for any merely intellectual reason that we are acting, the pursuit and the promulgation of Truth are to satisfy some conscious or unconscious feeling within ourselves; the attitude of the individual in his controversy is implicitly a form of self-preservation, a preservation of the feeling of self.¹ Why should we otherwise so strongly resent opposition when some of our cherished ideas are at stake? The more profoundly a man's total consciousness is concerned, the more keenly will he feel divergence of opinion—it is not knowledge or the pursuit of know-

¹ Cf. above, pp. 78, 105.

ledge, it is he himself who is threatened. And if this be so, whatever position we hold represents to a greater or less degree our own personal development, and the more we feel it to be bound up with ourselves the greater the difficulty of changing it abruptly or drastically. Yet, our position can grow, it can develop, but it cannot be abruptly removed or altered. Consequently, if religion is founded on phenomena, on "psychical realities" (see p. 79), men's positions may differ and change, but as long as there are these phenomena there will be religious standpoints, — the rationalistic, unsympathetic, specialistic, or detached attitudes may ignore them, but they will be there, and will demand attention. All contribute to our conceptions of an ideal Personality (cf. p. 90 *sqq.*).

Counter-criticism, sympathetic or otherwise.—In Old Testament criticism progress has been made by those who were acquainted with the subject and endeavoured to further Biblical study. But the most hostile and unsympathetic have at least indirectly contributed, by emphasizing features which the theologian, as theologian, could not be expected to see. The opponents of any prevailing theory have stimulated a closer inspection of the data and a more comprehensive exposition. And often they have found objections which it was necessary to answer, and in so doing they have given strength to it. And when they have forced attention to *their* standpoint they have made critics take a wider and more intensive basis. All this has been for the good of the cause. But the advances which are immediately conspicuous in Biblical study, and are in the line of its evolution, are due to those whose tendencies were both progressive and sympathetic; although a debt is owed to all who have in any way made the study more comprehensive and, in consequence, better adapted to a greater variety of minds. This leads to a fact which must be especially emphasized. In Old Testament criticism the goal was not

reached with the discovery of difficulties and errors in the Bible, the culminating point was not the recognition that the Old Testament could not be viewed any longer in the way handed down from the past. This is significant of the sober attitude in all progressive thought. If the Old Testament is the centre of a body of ideas and beliefs which are felt to be incompatible with the state of knowledge, are we to reject the Old Testament and this body *en bloc*? What has happened and is still happening among those who occupy, what one may call, the "sympathetic" attitude, is adjustment. It is, however, no obscurantist or artificial adjustment, but one as *bona fide* and natural as that of the scientist who adjusts his body of ideas and beliefs comprised under Darwinism, or of the rationalist who realizes that his rationalism must keep in touch with the progress of knowledge.

Development of attitudes.—The change that has ensued is characterized by a difference in the attitude towards the Old Testament. The Book remains as a collection of phenomena which require an explanation; the fact that inherited explanations are found inadequate is a call to investigate these *and* the Book. As a result of this, as every one knows, critics (and in large measure their opponents) would not look in the early chapters of Genesis for sober and literal history; early ideas of prophecy and the prophets have changed, and the old belief in the literal infallibility of the Bible is—it is to be hoped—more rarely maintained. Features which, from a certain standpoint, seemed to be the very backbone of the Old Testament have disappeared, and the fact that the Book is found to have an even profounder value than before is a testimony to the character of the development of thought. It is not the Old Testament that was wrong, but former attitudes and explanations; and just as the individual throughout his lifetime undergoes variation in the development of *his* attitudes, so also in the field

of Old Testament study the feature that is all-important is the growth in the standpoint. The real evolution is that of an attitude or standpoint to the Book and its problems. Consequently, if at the present day it is still difficult to reconcile the Old Testament with our total experience, this may only mean that our attitude towards it and our knowledge of it are still imperfect.¹ There will be a type of mind prepared to pursue investigations—a type, detached and isolated, but inspired by a desire to cope with the difficulties which it finds. And there will be the type which will view with perplexity, disquiet, or opposition, such further advances as may be made by the more progressive individuals ; and this type will help to check extremeness. But there may still be the third type of mind, one that remains satisfied with the discovery that the Old Testament and their own previous experience are incompatible. These are they who are apt to forget that their own attitude has already developed in the past. So, also, in the study of religions, it is quite easy to select and treat the evidence in a way that is patently hostile, or unsympathetic towards the course of religion. At the same time there is no doubt that the evidence strikes at many ordinary views of what religion was, is, and might be. But it makes an important difference whether we aim merely at justifying ourselves, or whether we apply ourselves to all the phenomena and data mindful of our own development in the past, and of the continuous growth of knowledge. It may indeed be the claim of the rationalistic type of mind to search for Truth and to make it accessible to all who have been “ kept in blindness,”

¹ Psychologically, the Old Testament is a meaningless expression unless we have in our minds various ideas, beliefs, recollections, convictions, and so forth. This “ psychical body ” represents our conceptions of the Old Testament, and as this develops or evolves, our attitude to the Old Testament may be said to undergo an evolution. The evolution concerns at once ourselves, the objective data of study, and our attitude to them : all three can be said to develop.

but any rationalistic enquirer who assumed that Truth rested on his side and there alone would deserve those terms which he would apply to a position which he considered obscurantist, sophistical, irrational, and generally inferior. A rationalistic enquirer has the detached attitude that is necessary for the progress of knowledge ; but the attitude only deserves the epithet " rational " when it has that sympathetic interest which is the mark of the rational man, and through which knowledge has directly progressed and been synthesized. No attitude, no hypothesis is at all complete which deliberately rejects the evidence that it cannot explain or that does not fit in with the explanation adopted. Here is the weakness of rationalism and of all rationalistic and pseudo-scientific syntheses (see p. 118, note 2).

Imperfect syntheses and the apparent " return."

—It is interesting to notice the effort to give some completeness to a synthesis, hypothesis, position, or attitude that has at length been felt to be imperfect. Here we have the so-called " return " to some earlier position. In research an honoured name reappears, and we " return to Kant " ; or a " Neo- " is prefixed, and we read of Neo-Lamarckism or of Neo-Platonists. But though we may often observe tendencies favourable to some earlier or less progressive position, or to some earlier body of thought, that position or body of thought would not reappear in its old form (see p. 101, note 1). In Old Testament study at the present day there are certain tendencies in the advanced school which may appear to be a return to earlier and more conservative positions ; but it is quite certain that they do not justify any of these positions in their entirety.¹ Too much has happened in the inter-

¹ These tendencies are, in my own opinion, imperfect attempts to synthesize, but they are undoubtedly very important as illustrating that innate desire to co-ordinate enquiries and unify thought : the detached attitude which avoids the earlier interconnexions is not permanent. At the same time, since these tendencies are welcomed

vening period. When an individual returns to some earlier position, in religion, politics, or, let us say, in his attitude to his parents, the intervening period has not been without its effect. The old position or attitude is in a new form, and very often the reasons which led him to relinquish it will have disappeared. It is now on a stronger basis, because it has been purified by a criticism which was once felt to be necessary. In one form or another this apparent return is common. But it is difficult to describe the process. We often find that some datum in our mind presents itself in a new form, which, as we can often see, has meanwhile been influenced by the subsequent events. Again, we often reach a stage in some series of arguments where we realize that an earlier conclusion needs modification. Shall we say that we "return," or is it not the fact that an earlier stage has developed in the intervening period? A great deal depends on the way in which we are to describe the process: does a man "return" to the religion of his youth, or does it "reassert" itself in some developed form?

Development involves detachment.—Let us suppose that an individual has ideas of Prophecy or Inspiration which have undergone development. In such a case the body of thought with which they were originally connected does not necessarily develop simultaneously with these ideas. These ideas have developed by isolating them from their earlier contexts—they are like the specialists and individualists in their environment—and it does not necessarily follow that there is any

by the more conservative type of mind, it is instructive to notice that they may serve to move the average opinion much more readily than any of the more detached or more radical tendencies could hope to do. The current conservative type has already made a great advance upon the past, but to what is this due? It is due to the fact that certain elements of the more progressive positions admitted of being reconciled with the conservative body of thought. What seems to be a "return" in the special detached study may mean an advance or progress on the part of its whole environment.

subsequent recognizable readjustment. Or we can conceive an individual whose religious beliefs were so shaken by the development of his ideas of Prophecy or Inspiration that instead of these ideas becoming part of a new readjusted body of religious beliefs, they were left stranded, or they entered into a new body wherein the earlier religious beliefs were quite excluded. Now, common experience shows that the process of readjustment is never ideally complete. The individual who adjusted his newer ideas of Prophecy and Inspiration with his earlier religious beliefs would assuredly possess other ideas not in harmony with the progress of knowledge, and it is obvious that sooner or later he might feel the need of a further readjustment. In like manner, if the movement of ideas of Prophecy and Inspiration caused another individual to reject his earlier religious beliefs, his new position would none the less be ideally as incomplete as that of the first individual. In any development what develops is a part of some larger whole, something that was once an integral part of a context of ideas, beliefs, and so forth. Hence whether that which develops finds a new context or no, there is always the question of the fate of the other constituents of the original context.

The "spiral" movement of thought. — Although detachment and isolation are indispensable for progress they are relatively incomplete attitudes and are not permanent. Whatever prompts a mind to make a readjustment between the more detached elements and the completer consciousness, the phenomenon is a profound one. We often speak of people travelling along paths, diverging, going further than others, or returning, and our metaphorical language both tends to beg questions and is also lamentably inadequate. More suggestively we speak of the "spiral-like" movement of thought. Now, it is always interesting to observe the help we gain from anything that enables us to "visualize," however

imperfectly, the movement ; our thoughts about thought are usually too static. Certainly, in the movement of thought, there is never a return to an old position, but to the old on a higher level, and how often when thought seems to take us away from the goal we suddenly seem to come back to our starting-point, although it is on a "higher level" or in a new and more developed form !¹ Indeed, it has often happened in the progress of thought that while knowledge appears to lead away from accepted beliefs of the Unseen Order, a few steps more lead on to a far deeper realization of its significance. Again, while it is the individuals who trudge the spiral-like track, it is the slow-moving environment which is raised by their efforts to a higher plane ; and, just as the individual can help to raise his environment, so in his own personal body of thoughts his whole outlook may be developed through the movement in small specialistic fields (cf. p. 61).

Uniformity and reassertion of earlier ideas.—The spiral is a useful figure in some ways, but it is hopelessly imperfect. More suggestive in many respects is the analogy of the uniformity of type in organic evolution—the persistent manifestation of older fundamental features in a new form. In every genetic development of thought there is a combination of resemblances and differences. The continuity and interconnexion—*i.e.* the resemblances—are more significant than the discontinuity and abruptness, *i.e.* the differences. What is essential is the constant approximation to typical features in spite of change and variation—there is "evolution" though, viewed less closely, we may see "revolution."²

¹ Imagine a spiral fixed to a perpendicular stick. Viewed from above there is a return to the starting-point (the stick), viewed from the side there is a movement upwards.

² *E.g.* the French Revolution does not mark an absolute severance between the totality of conditions before and after. Some conditions persist in spite of the changes, there is a certain uniformity in the history when a larger and longer view is taken of the whole field (see p. 106).

If we may try to state the process in terms of the consciousness we may say that there is a "reassertion" of earlier integral features, but in new and more developed forms. When the youth passes from impatience of parental authority and returns once more to those feelings of affection for his parents which he had in his earlier days, we may say that the feeling which was once an inseparable part of his consciousness has been detached and isolated, but has subsequently reasserted itself in a form deepened by intelligence, understanding, and experience. It is a *reassertion* of these feelings rather than his *return* to them. The instinctive affection of the youth for his parents has usually been enriched by the period of criticism. So, too, an earlier innate religious feeling has often gained a greater wealth through the exercise of detached enquiry; and instead of saying that a man *returns* to the beliefs of his childhood it is safer to say that they *reassert* themselves in a more mature form. Second thoughts are best when the more intuitive ideas have been tested and criticized, but the third thoughts are, with Tennyson, a better and a riper first, when adjustment has been made between the instinctive, spontaneous, and natural Self and the fruits of experience.¹

The significance of "reassertion."—In the study of religions, while the scientific and rationalistic attitudes have certain advantages, those whose attitude is more sympathetic to religion may be said to cover a wider field, in that they are in touch with a larger variety of minds. But, on all analogy, the superiority will not lie wholly on the side of the more comprehensive and interconnected environment because it is always being influenced by the

¹ Ruskin, in his *Modern Painters*, says, of looking into anything: "As we look longer still we gradually return to our first impressions, only with a full understanding of their mystical and innermost reasons." Elsewhere he writes that in many matters of opinion "our first and last coincide, though on different grounds; it is the middle stage which is farthest from the truth." It is very important to notice that these are ordinary, psychological processes, but they are full of meaning for a better understanding of the development of the consciousness.

progress of its parts, nor on the side of the more departmental, detached, and isolated sections of it, because they will always be a part of the whole. The more we can perceive the working of the principle of "reassertion," the more we have to realize that not only is our consciousness objectively incomplete but that the completest consciousness we can conceive would comprise the completest interconnexion of thoughts, the various parts, sections, or groups of which would not necessarily be in their present form. Now, if in the movement of thought there are certain features which are left behind, some of which certainly reassert themselves in a new form, can it be said that there are any limits to this process? The men who have made for movement in thought have not concerned themselves with the whole field, but only with particular sections of the sphere of thought in which they were interested. We may point to the work of Darwin and Wellhausen. Luther, too, may be cited. He was a theologian and a moralist, but as a religious reformer he was departmental and "specialistic," as are all men of reforming zeal.¹ His movements as regards indulgences, purgatory, and other features were slow. His own general world of thought lagged behind, as it were.² And it is interesting to notice that, just as Luther did not take up at once all the features immediately affected by his reforms, so in the history of the Reformation itself the process of adjustment between the newer tendencies and the old inherited thought and ways of thinking was, and in fact is still, incomplete.³ The progressive tendency

¹ It is often forgotten that those moved by progressive aims are normally only departmentally progressive. In other particulars they are normally as "conservative" as are those who are opposed to their particular progressive movements.

² Robertson Smith, too, did not touch the wider issues immediately involved in his own movements; see above, p. 68 *seq.*

³ It is well known that there was an apparent "retrogression" from the reforming ideals. We shall find this also after the activity of the prophets in ancient Israel. See below, pp. 306 *sqq.*

is checked, and also enriched and strengthened by the "reassertion," in their original or in a modified form, of those features that belonged to the context or environment in which the tendency first manifested itself. Roman Catholicism, it has been urged, has a wider context of thought in that its theology finds a place for definite beliefs concerning the dead, and it has been said that in this and in certain other respects Protestant theology is fragmentary. This may be mentioned because while some cannot conceive a future supremacy of Roman Catholicism, others are impressed by the rationalistic character of the "liberal theology" of Protestantism. Others again can conceive the possibility of a Protestantism of the future which shall as completely fill the psychological life of the individual as Roman Catholicism does that of its devout adherents, for, as the late Father Tyrrell said, "the religion of all men must be the religion of the whole man" (*Medievalism*, p. 186).

Opinions of this sort are interesting as illustrating the significance of "reassertion," but it is necessary to notice that there seem to be only two alternatives. Either we have to conceive the possibility of an absolutely complete body of thought, without room for further development, or there will continue to be a conflict between some more progressive body of religious thought and the large environment to which it belongs.¹

Sympathetic criticism. — In life and thought the individual must show that his lines of activity are sufficiently in touch with current conditions, and that they harmonize. Confronted with conflicting positions, if he desires to justify his own and to influence his environment he must understand the requirements of his situation. The greater the effort to understand other positions, the more readily a man understands his own and can improve it. His own may be perfectly clear to himself, but in

¹ See above, p. 117, n. 1.

seeking to influence his opponents he finds it necessary to "see" things from an outlook different from his own. In thus gaining some knowledge of other "psychical levels" he is widening his own, and, inasmuch as his detached position is admittedly and necessarily incomplete, he is unconsciously influencing his own total outlook. His position may be intellectually more easily defensible, but the point is this, that, when from one position one can apprehend that which is thought to be inferior and weaker, one has a better chance of appeal, one understands one's own position more clearly, and one is working towards some more remote stage of development where divergence and lack of harmony are lessened.

The place of religion in thought.—Now when we think of development or of evolution we have in mind the effective phenomena which culminate at a certain point. In the organic world, for example, it culminates in man, and the scientist concentrates upon this and ignores lines which lead away in other directions. It is a "purposive" selection of data and is so far justified by the results. When we are dealing with thought, however, we are necessarily influenced by the general outlook we possess; and thus the scientist is influenced by his own general position rather than, let us say, by the account of creation in the first chapter of Genesis. In like manner, when religion is involved, while some have thought that the decay of religion is an inevitable or necessary sequel of the progress of thought, others cannot conceive any other sequel than a continued growth and development. The difference rests upon the place of religion in the outlook of the particular individuals concerned. If we consider this psychologically, it is obvious that the fundamental question is not the particular attitude of this or the other individual at such and such a date, but whether what we call religion is or is not an integral part of the world of thought. There appear to be some minds that

can view with ease the elimination of religion, but if we consider the general average type of man among the world's religions, in savage or uncivilized lands, or even among those who reject a strictly orthodox religion for theosophy, or Christian science, and so forth, it is self-evident that the consciousness of the vast majority of mankind craves some form of religion. Further, if religion belongs to the realm of the supersensuous and the supernatural, it is critically the sounder method to take this craving of the consciousness into consideration. To ignore it is the acme of unscientific procedure. Some individuals pass from the non-religious to the religious attitude; *subjectively*, it is extremely significant that they feel a greater fulness in life, while, *objectively*, the development brings a wider interconnexion of ideas, it coordinates and synthesizes the different sides of life. That other individuals reverse the process and will feel greater satisfaction from the non-religious attitude is less significant. The religious aspect readily admits of being left out of account, and when this has happened in the past there has been a direct or indirect contribution to the progress of knowledge which has subsequently given religion a fuller significance.¹ But the step away from religion—the reverse process—leaves the realm of the psychical life incomplete; a man does not “return” to the religion of his youth, but it may “reassert” itself in a new form, and if we are to take a longer view of psychical development we cannot imagine that death is the end?² In other words, the fact that what is

¹ One little realizes how much the progress of religion owes, indirectly at least, to those whose non- or anti-religious attitude has compelled their opponents to reconsider, re-state, and re-establish their own religious convictions.

² In the *Life and Letters* of George John Romanes (1896, p. 352 *seq.*), there is an admirable example of the “reassertion” of what lay isolated during years of devotion to scientific research. His “tenacity of uncorrelated fragments,” his “endurance of incompleteness,” his “patient refusal to attenuate or discard a fact because it will not fit into a

commonly called religion does not enter into the life of an individual is no proof that it is rightly absent; it is not so important as the fact that it finds a place in the environment of which he forms a small and an integral part. So long as we all recognize a profounder side of the consciousness, manifesting itself in art, poetry, human relationships, or even in the heat of politics, we cannot leave out of account that more mysterious part of life which is not to be dismissed, either because there is in it so much that is unknown, intangible, or irrational, or because those individuals—of whatever race—who rank as religious have beliefs and behaviour of which we disapprove. One individual may find in his experience the most unmistakable grounds for his religious views, but, just as he cannot conceive their being eliminated, so his opponent, in whom religion finds no sympathetic reception, may have in turn a consciousness so full and complete that he cannot imagine himself holding another and a religious position.¹

The adolescence of thought.—It might still be urged that there is at the present day a more decisive feeling that religion is unnecessary for the continued development of the world's thought, that the modern stronger and more intellectual anti-religious or non-religious tendencies are pointing to a new stage in the evolution of consciousness. It is true that there is a conspicuous tendency in modern thought which finds a parallel in the man who feels that he has outgrown the beliefs in which he has been brought up, and who, having thus detached himself from them with equanimity, feels

system"—all this is characteristic of the sincere scientific and special-istic mind which is led onward into the unknown. But if Romanes was able to form a new co-ordination, there have been minds equally sincere that do not seem to have attained that stage on this side of the grave.

¹ The fundamental difference between the *subjective* feeling of a complete and entire and comprehensive outlook or standpoint and the *objective* analysis of that standpoint must be carefully observed. See above, p. 89.

the stronger. In this difficult period of intellectual adolescence there is a feeling of freedom and of self-conscious strength, which sometimes is so vivid that a man seems to stand on the brink of a new era. All that is realized has such a wealth and strength that it is disturbing. Even in their intellectual work men are sometimes apt to realize their progress so vividly that they are astounded at the blindness of their contemporaries or predecessors! Social reformers will so keenly feel and see the existing evils that they are convinced, and they behave as though they were convinced, that no serious or intelligent effort had previously been made to amend them. This awakening occurs frequently in the field of religion. Now, the individual at any stage of keen self-consciousness can do himself and others much harm, but there is the environment to adjust and moderate. In the historical development of certain areas there have often been the characteristics of adolescence, but they prove to be a stage in the lengthy development of the environment, and not growths leading along entirely new lines—there was a reversion to type or a “reassertion” of what had hitherto prevailed.¹ If at the present day the characteristics of adolescence extend over a much larger area, irrespective of geographical distribution, nationality, creed, and class, all analogy goes to show that where there is divergence there must be, sooner or later, either ruin and chaos or adjustment of the new and the old. Of course, adjustment does not inevitably follow; to this the downfall of old civilizations and empires bears witness. It may be that there are world-wide movements on a larger scale than have hitherto happened, that the warning of past history as to the limits of purely human endeavour may be ignored. But even though empires and civiliza-

¹ See Prof. H. M. Chadwick, *The Heroic Age* (1912), p. 444, who compares the characteristics of Heroic Ages in general, not with infancy or maturity, but with youth and its feelings of self-sufficiency.

tions have fallen in the past, they have left an inheritance which has tended to elevate the larger and less civilized areas affected by their existence, and if we would face the evidence we cannot overlook the simple fact that the total environment adjusts, and that the larger the movement the more necessary to consider its larger environment. If we are to take things as we find them, and consider the interconnexion of thought over the whole world, and the manner in which influences spread, it is a simple fact that the vast majority of men at the present day are at the most only half-civilized—from the standpoint of the civilization of the white—and that their beliefs and behaviour come under the category of religion of a distinctly supernaturalistic character.

The serious nature of the problem.—Civilized man has a duty not only to himself, but also to those who have come under the influence of his civilization. The activity of men, working out their psychical development amid errors and mistakes, and the collective activity of the environment, moderating, tempering, and levelling up, compel us to realize the inadequacy of any outlook that confines itself to the visible world and ignores the facts of psychical development in the consciousness of the individual. An age may be, like the youth, thoroughly self-conscious and self-sufficient, but this feeling is incomplete so long as it overlooks the significance of life, confuses its purposive activities with a fuller purpose that manifests itself in the development of the environment, and leaves out of account the meaning of experiences which it is the task of the study of religions to investigate. Here, then, is the general level of the great world of life and thought at the present day, impeding and disappointing, and strangely adjusting everywhere in its own way the loftiest aims of the sincerest individuals. We are finding by experiment the difficulty of raising other psychical levels to that more "superior" one of ourselves.

Between the civilized and the non-civilized, the more progressive and the less progressive, the religious and the non-religious, this position and its antagonist—between these there is a conflict which compels us to recognize that the more we understand the other man, our opponent, or our “inferior,” the better we understand ourselves and our place in the Universe. The work of adjustment is either possible or impossible; it has been achieved in the past step by step through the collective efforts of the environment; it rests with individuals whether they would consciously work with this process or against it.

Its universal aspects.—When we consider the past progress of thought it is impossible not to observe how appropriate has been the connexion between successive stages. In religion the theologian can find many examples. In research one may notice how the philosophers and theologians prepare the environment for a Darwin, and a Mendel comes to point the way to another stage—a Darwin was indispensable, but the path had been prepared for him. In Old Testament study we may see a line of men working within a relatively narrow field and simplifying the preliminary problems, and, at a time when a relatively adequate stage has been reached, a vast amount of external evidence comes to hand, to spur others on to test and improve the results already gained. Had it come earlier this particular study would have been unable to cope with it. And so to-day, in a great variety of fields, research is more specialistic, but the underlying connexions appear more fundamental; there is a deep probing down to the bottom of things, a dissection and a laying bare of what had been taken for granted or only superficially handled. All this means nothing or something. In a thousand and one directions men are going down into their environment, its origin, its relations. Interest in other lands and ages has never been so keen,

and yet so apparently useless. The past is either exceptionally important or as useless. Either the future is inevitably linked with the past or we begin a new age, and if we look back upon the inauguration of new eras it is seen that both may be true. Vaguely or clearly some men feel that there is a value in the past ; even as others with equal persistence probe into technical questions of science and mathematics that have no obvious practical utility at the moment, and even as a third type can see only the circumstances in existing material conditions that cry for healing. There is a mingling of strenuous endeavour for some present very recognizable purposes and for some more remote conditions which cannot be divined, and on all analogy the latter will embrace and surpass those of to-day. Just as we are finding that men in the past built better than they knew, so it may well be that the conscious and unconscious activities in the world of to-day will have some culminating sequel, though not precisely that which different individuals anticipate.

The outlook for the future.—On all sides it is felt that the future has something in store ; and the feeling reflects itself sub-consciously in various ways.¹ Everywhere among thinking people anxiety and pessimism balance hope and confidence. It is just at this age, then, that the comparative and psychological study of religions has gradually been coming more and more to the front under the influence of the most diverse interests. Not, surely, because it is detrimental to religion ; not, surely,

¹ It is curious that in New Testament research one modern characteristic tendency has been towards the eschatological problems ; for some reason or other the beliefs concerning the last things are found to be specially worthy of study. Note also the spirit of evangelistic and socialistic Christianity, a feature equally characteristic and equally in touch with modern socialistic ideals. Even the prophets of the Old Testament are now often regarded as essentially social reformers. Eschatology and social reform represent certain aspects of the " spirit of the age " ; cf. p. 302.

because it is to support some narrow intellectualistic or materialistic position; not, indeed, to uphold an individualistic mysticism—the pursuit so intimately concerns the profounder side of thought and our conceptions of thought, that it must surely have something to offer. And so, at an age when many feel something oppressive in the uncertainties of the future and in the disappearance of old-time landmarks, the study of religion takes us to the examination, not merely of the obvious religious beliefs and behaviour of peoples ancient and modern, but to the underlying impulses, the outlooks, and the interconnexions of ideas that have influenced men who are playing or have played a part in life. It takes us away to more comprehensive standpoints and larger views which have an underlying similarity, and which, in spite of their imperfections and inadequacy—when judged from modern standpoints—have been effective in the history of man. It leads away from pessimism to optimism, but from pride to humility—optimism as regards Mankind, humility as regards his place in the Universe. The disturbances which impress themselves, often painfully, upon many minds, the changing lights, the fading away of some things and the new aspect of others—whether this is the sunset or the dawn this study does not tell us, but if there is any certain conclusion one can draw from past history, it is that it rests with each and every individual which of the two it will be.

The handling of the problems of religion.—But just as keen, conscientious investigation has brought us to this age, so only it can bring the desired result. Lofty aims are no novelty, and the men of the sincerest convictions are not necessarily the most discriminate or intelligent. Hence, for the furtherance of impartial and unprejudiced research the question of attitude may be briefly summarized. Those who belong to the anti-religious tendency may be as sincere as their opponents,

but is the tendency in touch with the vast world of thought, is it in line with its lengthy development, and does it enable them to apprehend the opposing, the religious tendency, or must they treat it as the outcome of superstition and error? The data of human experience are objective data, apart from our estimate of their religious, moral, or ethical value, and that man's standpoint is one-sided and imperfect if he cannot view with some sympathy the religious data of human beings of like descent with himself. To take the non-religious tendency as a culmination is contrary to the whole teaching of the past; it raises difficulties immensely greater than it removes; it annihilates scientific psychological investigation. To rest content with the conclusion that the religious standpoint is imperfect or inadequate is the antithesis of rational enquiry. At every stage in the history of a body of thought errors have been made on all sides, and the inadequacy of earlier positions has been recognized; but immediate progress has been due to those who could sympathize with that which they criticized. In a word, the method of research is to take into consideration all the data, and not to ignore that which we have neither the patience nor sympathy to handle, and not to dismiss facts simply because they are too remote from our consciousness. Never could it be said that religion has been without its crude, gross, unlovely, or absurd features, or that religious people have always been beneficial to the environment. But impartial investigation can see the same faults in politics, rationalism, love, reforming zeal, and elsewhere, and it would refuse to be misled by that upon which one-sided investigation might be content to linger.

The types of mind to be considered.—Proceeding on these lines, the study of religions has three types of minds to keep in view. There is the purely specialistic, properly neutral, and dispassionate type, to whom it

owes most. The standpoint is rightly detached, but may run the risk of being one-sided. It can, however, be strengthened and widened by attention to the various positions opposing it.¹ Between undue deference to specialistic attitudes that may be eccentric and isolated and an equally harmful deference to ordinary opinion and its dilettantism the student of religions has to thread his way. The second type is the distinctly anti-religious, hostile, rationalistic type, which in turn has been of service, though only indirectly. In so far as it bases itself upon human reason, enough has been said of the weaknesses of this type from the point of view of pure research. It is not merely imperfect, it is under suspicion of being uncritical, antiquated, and irrational. The third type is distinctively religious. It may have a wider and larger interconnexion of thought, but it is too apt to forget that its position has moved considerably in the past, and that where it fails to appeal the fault does not necessarily lie outside itself. Although hostile to the non- and anti-religious type, it has been in the past more directly affected by those of its kind; the most serviceable and positive advances in religious research have been made by those who have been religious rather than otherwise. The progressive individual within the fold is variously regarded as its worst enemy or its best friend; and, as can be seen in the case of such men as Bishop Colenso, Robertson Smith, and many another, the true estimate is not always made at once. Thus can the unorthodoxy of one generation become the orthodoxy of the next. Because the religious feeling is so intense, progressive individuals may easily suffer more at their hands than at the hands of those with whom perhaps they have no real sympathy; while the fact that such individuals can sincerely maintain religious convictions is a guarantee that the existence of religion does not depend upon the

¹ See above, pp. 27 *seq.*, 117 *seq.*

quantity of knowledge a given man possesses at a given point in his psychical development.¹

Minds, and a Supreme Mind.—Upon these three types rests the fate of the ordinary level of the environment, the ordinary individuals who are not, intellectually speaking, specialistic, or deeply religious, or aggressively anti-religious. The environment has its claims, and that which is meant to appeal to it must be sufficiently in harmony with its thought. This is not to say that its level is "lower." When we speak of different psychical levels, we really refer to different phases and stages in the development of the consciousness of individuals who come between an immensely remote past, when man first came into being, and an unknown future. And we judge them from our present position.² Although to appeal there must be some adjustment of psychical levels, it is no real "decline" from a "superior" to an "inferior"; on the contrary, a greater "fulness" is given to both. It is the problem of life and thought to find the appropriate

¹ Robertson Smith, for example, quite clearly manifests his antagonism to the rationalism of his age, although his own Church was against him.

² Although we must perforce employ metaphors we must not be misled by them. The notion of different "levels" involves some position, some standard, but it is easy to see that points at different levels might be conceived as situated on converging lines, and these lines could be drawn so that any point in turn would be nearest the goal. The feeling of superiority or inferiority may be justified no doubt as regards particulars (*e.g.* intellect, artistic ability, linguistic attainments, memory, and so forth); but commonly we proceed from the part to the whole, and the feeling is extended to the whole self in such a way that the superiority or inferiority seems to be complete. The particulars are only parts of a whole, and the whole comprises at least all the features valued by all the constituents of the entire environment. The environment provides more or less objective notions of superiority and inferiority—*e.g.* the honest man is better than the dishonest, the wise than the foolish—but the attributes refer to particulars, and the dishonest man in other respects might be on a "higher level" than the honest. There would be a more real objectivity if we could determine the relative value of the various particulars for the final good of the environment or the standard of an environment that had an ideally complete system of thought.

relationship in order to achieve ends, and in making this effort one is learning more of the relationship between different minds. This is naturally invaluable for understanding ancient or savage religions. But more than this, it is exceedingly important for that religious point of view which recognizes a superior, immanent, and transcendent Mind, a supreme Mind which adjusts itself to the immensely inferior consciousness of the human being, a Mind towards the fuller understanding of which man has been slowly progressing. Thus, in dealing with the vicissitudes of thought, with the problem of different attitudes and of their development, we gain some preliminary knowledge of the relationships between minds. Now man has always expressed, on the grounds of his ordinary experiences, those supersensuous experiences which go to make up the contents of religions, and we constantly find the savage conceiving his gods as beings endowed with feelings and behaviour similar to his own. The invariable habit of explaining the unknown from the known which is practised in reflective thought and which we meet with in religions is that which impresses itself upon us once more as we close this chapter, since it is a guarantee that there can be in the future, as there has been so regularly in the past, a religion in harmony with what is known.

Thought, religion, and the environment.—In the opening pages emphasis was laid upon the significance of the divergence of thought (p. 16 *seq.*). The endeavour has now been made to illustrate wherein the significance lies. All the differences are individual contributions to our knowledge of the whole of which we are part. Equally to be emphasized is the keenness of feeling where the greatest values are concerned—whether in religious, social, political, or scientific controversy—it helps us to understand the vicissitudes in other lands and ages whenever the profounder side of the consciousness has been

involved. The fact that divergence of thought is generally *bona fide* makes it irrational to boast too loudly of man's reasoning powers, and the way in which objects of thought are commonly regarded as static, structural things rather than as growing bodies has been and is a fundamental source of error.¹ In an enquiry which strives to be impartial the aim is to find an adequate explanation of all the relevant data. It has sometimes been maintained that all religions can be classed together as alike irrational, abounding in superstition, and vitiated by ideas of the supernatural. This attitude, as I have tried to show, is too specialistic and detached. But the more uncompromisingly this attitude sees the same essential features in all religions, the more clearly we gain a conviction of their essential unity, and according as they all stand or fall, so must this attitude form its estimate of the enormous majority of human beings in past and present ages, and reach its conception of the Universe. At the same time, in so far as such an attitude leaves unexplained the irrational, superstitious, and supernatural features, and is content to dismiss them as mere superstition, or the like, thought is no whit the gainer. If the only rational attitude is to dismiss a great body of data as irrational, and to fall back upon such obscure terms as "superstition" in default of an explanation, it may be magnificent, but it is not the attitude that has won battles, has elevated an environment, or has made progress.

In conclusion, the *total* environment is the arbiter of all detached or specialistic enquiry; there is that which transcends individuals and refuses to assimilate all that is too much out of touch with it. The environment is

¹ Thought should be likened to that which lives and develops, and organic processes could doubtless be better followed if one considered the analogy of the processes in the movement of thought. In any case the problems of life and of thought or consciousness are most closely interconnected (see p. 56, n. 1).

ultimately that whole of which every individual is an integral part. It has its claims, and how it enforces them we see when we turn from the more individualistic and specialistic attitudes to a consideration of certain instructive features in the larger body of thought.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

THE TREATMENT OF THE MOVEMENT OF THOUGHT

THE preceding pages may be supplemented by noticing a simple typical illustration of a common attitude to the vicissitudes of thought engendered by ideas of evolution. A recent defence of materialism states very explicitly: "Science is completely and without exception materialistic. The progress of science therefore necessarily means the progress of materialism." Now, in the first place, from a certain scientific point of view there is no such thing as "Science." If we were strictly and consistently scientific and rationalistic it is questionable whether it is legitimate to speak of such an entity: science has no real or material existence; it consists of aims, ideals, standpoints, pieces of evidence, data, phenomena, conjectures, theories, hypotheses, and what not, encircling various objects, some of perception, and some only of conception. Once admit that it is legitimate to talk of them as a single entity, and the inconsistency of certain pseudo-scientific and anti-religious standpoints becomes apparent.

Next, by "Science" the writer has in view scientists, but he leaves it open whether all scientists are materialists, or whether only those who are materialists are contributing to the progress of science. So long as some scientists do not happen to be materialists, such sweeping statements as that cited above are as misleading as the not rare assumption that Old Testament critics are rationalists. Now, a well-known rationalist has averred that "rationalism, broadly, implies the habitual resort to reason, to reflection, to judgement."¹

¹ J. M. Robertson, *Rationalism* (1912), p. 12.

This goes too far, for if the definition be correct, we should all *claim* to be rationalists. In like manner, political parties could be so generously defined that a man would be variously a Liberal, a Conservative, and a Socialist at once. But if we take "rationalism" in its ordinary popular connotation, some critics of the Old Testament might certainly be rationalists, others, however, are distinctly opposed to rationalism. While some might be rationalists, and all would employ methods similar to those employed by rationalists, it is wrong to suppose that the critic must *ipso facto* be a rationalist. So, too, it is erroneous to assume that the scientist must be a materialist, unless we make it clear that all other scientists are of quite another order—and that is for the scientists to settle among themselves.

The writer from whom I have quoted proceeds to refer to a reaction against materialism: "Last century the great discoveries suggested materialism so forcibly as to produce a great wave, certain to be succeeded by a trough." Now, here we may be misled by the picturesque metaphors. The simile is, to say the least, unfortunate, in a work that, as it happens, is aimed against spiritualistic, supernaturalistic, idealistic, and other anti-materialistic views. For, if science is to be alternately materialistic and the reverse, it is easy to suggest that either the anti-materialistic tendencies of science are the truer, and will be the final outcome of research, or the voice of science is inconclusive by itself, because it varies at various periods. Either science is not really materialistic, or science does not of itself point with any certainty to either materialism or its rival.

The writer adds: "This century the discoveries have not been such as to force materialism so prominently forward." Are we to infer, then, that the science of the last century is out of date? or does he wish us to understand that the materialistic *inferences* based upon the science of the age have lost their validity? Is it not obvious that either we gain an idea of the general lack of conclusiveness of science, or we are forced to realize that the materialistic or other tendencies lie in the interpretation of the phenomena and not in the phenomena themselves? The latter is the more sensible view, and it emphasizes the two facts, (1) the difference between phenomena (in the abstract), and the particular interpretation

they have in some synthesis, and (2) the misunderstandings caused by metaphorical or question-begging descriptions of the movement of ideas.

As is well known, materialistic and anti-religious tendencies can be found at many places and times ; but it does not follow that they will overcome the religious. Nor does the converse follow. Other arguments must be adduced. We are apt to seize particular evidence, view it as an entity, hypostatize it, as it were, and place it in some line of development. In this way, according to our several standpoints, we see Magic followed by Religion, Supernaturalism by Science, Spiritualism by Materialism or Rationalism, Religion by Positivism, and so forth. The line of evolution is influenced by our own personal development ; and consequently it usually culminates in a way that—curiously enough—usually coincides with our ideals.¹ But evolution does not involve the annihilation of the earlier stages ; the lower orders still “ survive ” to represent steps in the lengthy evolution of the race. So, in the development of thought, occupied though we may be with particular lines of development, we should not ignore the claims of the whole, nor assume that the ideal development involves the annihilation of earlier stages or of all that seems to lie outside it. Our rough-and-ready ways of regarding the development of thought, even our very plans for promoting its course, are very apt to take forms that might seem to suggest that man, after recognizing himself to be the lord of creation, was proposing or hoping to expedite the disappearance of all that justified his title.²

¹ Note also how our view of the evolution of any body of thought (in research, politics, etc.) is based upon a series of abstractions, and ignores all the data that would disturb it. See further, on this “ Selection,” the following chapter.

² Feelings of relative superiority and inferiority underlie our notions of evolution ; and the feelings are instinctive, and need both careful guidance and a rational conception of their significance.

CHAPTER V

SURVIVALS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

I. GENERAL REMARKS

Survivals.—In the preceding pages we have been noticing certain features in the movement of thought. We have contrasted the more progressive, radical, and specialistic individuals with their environment. Some were outside the normal thought of their age ; they were misunderstood, neglected, or repudiated ; sometimes they were what is called “ ahead ” of their age. We now come to those who are not only outside the environment ; they seem to be “ behind ” the age. They are our evidence for what are called “ survivals.” “ Survivals ” in belief and custom are those curious phenomena which appear in the higher levels or in civilized lands, but take us away to the lower levels, to savage lands, and to bygone times. Such are the beliefs and practices connected with witchcraft, fairies, good or evil spirits, wells, stones, bushes and trees, animal and other embodiments of the soul, luck and divination, attempts to tell or to control the future, and so forth. The presence of such features as these in civilized and Christian lands invariably arouses interest because they differ so noticeably from ordinary thought. It is necessary to try and understand their significance and the significance of their presence. Are these beliefs and practices to be regarded as *débris* carried along the

waves of time from some long-past age? Are they an inheritance from our savage or semi-civilized past? Do they point to some crude and savage-like "level" of thought underlying the civilization and culture of our age? How can we best describe and explain them? Even current religious beliefs have been spoken of patronizingly or slightly as "survivals" from an age of ignorance. It is highly important, therefore, to understand the persistence of "survivals" in spite of the development or evolution of knowledge, ethics, morals, and religion.

The principle of selection.—A few preliminary points first claim attention. In approaching the problem we must observe at the outset that whenever we recognize a "survival" we are implying a gulf between it and us. More or less unconsciously we make a selection and a comparison, and feel a difference. Now, if a man believes in witches he is our evidence for a "survival," but the fact conveys no meaning to us unless we have our own ideas about witches. The word "witchcraft" will not arouse ideas of cigarettes or puddings, but we might possibly think of a smoking cauldron or of some magical brew. The datum has in our mind an appropriately selected context of ideas, beliefs, feelings, etc., and this is the basis of the comparison and of the judgment. We instinctively "select" and group together a number of suitable data; or rather this "selection" is done for us by the mind; and were it not for this "selection" of relevant material we could not move a step. The theory of evolution itself is based upon a more *conscious* selection of data; and unless we were always making selections from the innumerable data of life, existence would be inconceivable.¹ Out of the things that do or could

¹ More than memory is needed, the recollection must be of congruous data, data that have the same "context," and belong to the same "body." The process is classificatory and purposive.

present themselves at any given moment we consciously or unconsciously make a selection, and our mental apparatus works so readily that it rarely occurs to us to consider our endowment.

Survivals involve selection.—When we talk of inheriting beliefs or views or customs, or of their descending to us, or of their surviving, we are not dealing with tangible things that pass like heirlooms from one generation to another, but with a continuous process of selection, adoption, and assimilation, whereby each individual accepts a certain number of the data which are in his environment. When we deal with “survivals” we are dealing with the consciousness of individuals who retain certain beliefs or practices which we so stigmatize. We do and think things in one way, but reflexion and criticism show us that we have consciously or unconsciously selected only one out of a possible number of ways; we could have done or thought otherwise, but for some reason or other we did not. Further, when we come to take stock of our environment, is it or is it not surprising to find a certain homogeneity of thought and behaviour? Individuals may differ considerably, no two will agree precisely in everything, but their homogeneity is everywhere greater than the heterogeneity. If we leave on one side all that is due to temperament and to the various more individual and accidental factors (education, occupation, interests), the processes of selection, adoption, or assimilation evidently run along very similar lines. There are distinctive individualistic characteristics and tendencies as a result of which no two individuals would acquire precisely the same total stock of data or possess the same sort of consciousness; but all the world over men are—psychologically speaking—very closely akin one to the other, and the kinship is more conspicuous when we study those that belong to the same environment. On closer inspection we readily see how

much we differ among ourselves ; but the "psychical" kinship is so usual that, generally speaking, we are impressed only when we find people who differ characteristically from the average. Hence the impression made upon us when we discover "survivals" in the environment.

Subconscious processes.—Now, when we do *this* and think *that*, we are not usually actuated by a survey of the various possibilities which prolonged reflexion or the advice of our friends might suggest. As a general rule we do not formulate choice or reasons ; certain habits and ways of thinking or of looking at things have grown up with us. The greater part of the work is done for us ; we are unconscious of any process, and indeed persistent introspection would interrupt the activity. Only on reflexion and retrospection do we perceive that the more unknown and mysterious part of our psychical endowment is the very mainspring of our progress. Again, when we wish to think of anything, the required portion of our stock of data will generally present itself, imperfectly no doubt, but so invariably that we usually take it for granted that we can reproduce something. We are more conscious of this endowment only when we are racking our brains in vain attempt to recover something which, as a matter of fact, will often present itself subsequently and unbidden after we have ceased to worry. Frequently, too, troublesome questions which baffle us will, when put on one side, simplify themselves, so that the selection of data which once bothered us seems to have readjusted itself to a new shape, and to have taken a form that enables us to "see" more clearly than before a way out of the difficulty.¹ Thinking goes on within us, and the more we think about the process, the less likely it is to "run" smoothly. Thus, here are elementary examples of the fundamental value of that non-mechanical and more

¹ In this way one can think of the development or evolution of ideas in our mind or of their reassertion (cf. pp. 125, n. 1, 129 *seq.*).

or less subconscious part of the total self which belongs to every human being. This, again, is no doubt perfectly obvious, but it is apt to be overlooked in the study of religions that the profounder and more unknown side of the consciousness is an integral part of every man and not the less important.¹

Selection and purpose.—Now, when we are more consciously deliberating we make a more reasoned selection of the data presented to us, and we are naturally ready to select that which harmonizes with some purpose, fancy, or feeling which could perhaps be formulated. We tend to confirm a view, to direct certain impulses or lines of thought, and to give strength to some aspect of ourself. The course of research, for example, is distinctly more deliberately selective, and if in rejecting certain data we run the risk of error or of one-sidedness, were we to hold all in suspense and refrain from selection, movement would be paralysed. In life as in research the more reasoned the selection the freer and the more individualistic our experiment. But the process has been continuous; a very considerable amount of selection was done by us when we were so young that we can hardly conceive ourselves having any definite plan or purpose, or even having ability to select. The preparation for our activities in later years, when we are more deliberate, more alive to possibilities, and more aware of our own selves, has been made at a time when our consciousness was on a level which no adult can now comprehend. In a previous chapter it was observed that the environment in which the individual worked was also selective, and the purpose of the one was not to be confused with that of the other (p. 120). Where we can recognize a purpose it is that of the time, and neither the theologians nor their opponents who alike contributed to Biblical studies were alive to any

¹ This is a side or aspect of ourselves of which we are never immediately conscious, and which therefore eludes direct observation.

other conditions than those within their own horizon. Yet there was a continuous and genetic connexion throughout the history of research, and each one was contributing unconsciously to later stages which they could not have conceived. And this is true also if we consider any individual whose early childhood and youth seem as though they were a preparation for some sequel of which he could not have been conscious. Here, as in the course of a study, it would seem as though the past was unconsciously preparing for the future, as though the future had been implicit in the past (cf. p. 111 *seq.*).

Purpose and consciousness.—If we can find a continuous and genetic connexion in those stages where the data are intelligible, it is natural to suppose that this interrelation does not begin and end just where we can now recognize it. It is obvious that there must be a process of selection at work in the young child at a very early age. But can we say that the child is conscious of a purpose? When one studies the lower orders of organic life, one is frequently struck with extremely purposive and significant behaviour which, as *we* can see, is a preparation for vicissitudes which have not yet entered into their experience (see above, p. 111). They, like the young child, are so thoroughly adapted to their normal environment, and they would seem to grow so appropriately in consciousness as their conditions evolve, that it is difficult to find satisfactory terms for describing the behaviour. Even among ourselves, it is *we* who think and are intelligent and rational; it is our opponents in controversy who are strangely blind and irrational. Because we are apt to judge other psychical levels from our own, we estimate or interpret the object of attention—be it man, child, animal, or insect—from our standpoint, which—in the nature of the case—is the highest and an intellectual one! But the more uncompromisingly biological and psychological research unites man and the

lower orders in their response to stimuli and in their adaptive behaviour, the more necessary is it to consider the significance of the development of consciousness. We may be so thoroughly and completely "aware of ourselves"—if the phrase be allowed—that it seems impossible that the young child could have a consciousness *relatively* as complete as our own; yet while the selective process with him may seem automatic or "instinctive," it is so with us to a large degree, and it may be as truly purposive to him within the limits of his mind as ours is within ours. That is, the child may be purposive, but it need not be the purpose we recognize, or the feeling may be too vague to be called a purpose. We may say that we *know* our intentions; but so constantly do growth and development give another or a fuller meaning to our earlier activities that we cannot assert that we have a knowledge of what these activities will mean for the future. We cannot logically sever the steps in the development. *We* have a certain self-consciousness, certain aims and feelings, and if we deny these to the young child or the animal, it is, perhaps, largely because we do not realize how our own consciousness develops. Thus we are unjust to them and to our own youth. We see a relation between activities and their sequel, and decide that the sequel could not have been foreseen; what is required is that we should allow that the activities had some meaning for the child or the animal as apart from the sequel. This happens in reflective life and in research, where the meaning or purpose of the time are not to be confused with what they subsequently are. If we cannot apply the facts to the young child or the animal we shall tend to view them as more or less automatic or mechanical, as working by means of some sort of "instinct." But if so, they differ in degree and not in kind from the workers and thinkers of the past, and we shall end by regarding ourselves as automata, and we shall have to reserve the term "intelligence"

for the state of the completest self-consciousness! We should either have to drop terms of this sort or reserve them for an ideal condition where man has a perfectly complete knowledge of the essential and ultimate significance of all human activities.

The unrecognized purpose.—It is admittedly difficult to formulate the situation. We can readily grasp the idea of instinctive abilities and processes, and we can see that these are fundamental for the psychical development of the individual. Nor can we doubt the beneficial character of that "selective" process whereby our attention has been directed, consciously and unconsciously, to phenomena that have given us a stock of experience and knowledge. The child, playing at soldiers, does not necessarily become a soldier, but he is being fitted to cope with situations where the qualities exercised in play will be needed for more serious duties. But this is generally true, in that the work of the past constantly serves to prepare us for work of another kind. *We* can see the real significance of play, *we* can look back and see the utility of some past labour. On the other hand, we cannot look forward and see precisely for what sort of activities our toil of to-day is preparing us, though "intuitively" it may be felt that all conscientious labour of whatever kind is profoundly beneficial for the individual. *If* words are to be used in their ordinary meaning, our work of to-day is aided by reflexion, deliberation, and intelligence, of however poor a quality. *If* these words are to be retained, the attributes they involve must be ascribed to the ordinary individual or they must be seen somewhere in the whole psychical process of which the individual is part. The theory of "Natural Selection" itself even ascribes ideas of purpose and recognition of value to the environment. Now, by environment we mean the "whole" necessary for the individual's life, the totality of conditions indispensable for his entire welfare; and

the aim of research is to ascertain the nature of this world. "Natural Selection" is not an explanation of phenomena, but a description, transferring the problem from the *part* to the *whole* of which the phenomena are part. It is illegitimate to refuse, categorically, attributes of intelligence to this whole, for this whole has not been completely analysed; and it is unscientific to explain a problematical situation by resort to mechanistic ideas, because this begs the question at issue. It is only rational to recognize that our knowledge of consciousness is incomplete, that there is constant development of knowledge and conditions of life, and that psychical development gives man a fuller recognition of all the interconnected activities in which he is holding a share.

The false estimate of the whole from the part.—If we could arrest an environment in the midst of its development, or take a bird's-eye view of the contents of a man's mind, we should assuredly discover some features relatively "backward," and others relatively "advanced." If we were to estimate Sir Isaac Newton from his achievements in the study of the prophecies and of alchemy we should run the risk of committing serious mistakes. We do not remember the names of Descartes, Copernicus, or Kepler for those ideas which we now reject as antiquated; we think rather of the contributions made by the great men to the progress and the development of thought. We thus sever what has been woven into the line of the evolution of thought from that which we should be inclined to call old-fashioned. The presence of antiquated or old-fashioned ideas in otherwise normal individuals is analogous to that of "survivals" in cultured lands. And the first point to notice is, that just as we should err grievously if we judged the value of Sir Isaac Newton from his interest in alchemy, so, when we have to deal with an environment, the data presented to us may not be such as would allow us to estimate it fairly.

When we are presented with some datum we can often determine within limits to what sort of a context it belongs, but there are these limits, as we see when we ask what sort of a man could have been interested in alchemy, or could have been the author of the *Principia Mathematica*.¹ Our estimate will depend upon a comparison with appropriate data of known context. This is the method commonly employed both in everyday life and in reflective thought. So, for example, we have rough-and-ready ideas associating individuals who hold certain beliefs with certain schools of thought, political parties, or religious sects. We may be right or we may be wrong. There is no guarantee. Similarly we may argue from a flint implement to a certain culture; we may be right, but it is not unlikely that we are wrong, and that, as has happened, the flint implement continued to be used in higher cultures, even after the introduction of metals. We are influenced by our knowledge that flint implements characterize a certain type of culture; but if we are aware of the fact that such implements persist in higher cultures, we refrain from forming an estimate upon a single datum, and seek to know more of its context or environment.² So, also, the practice of a rain-charm would point to a certain psychical environment, but it would not necessarily be similar to that elsewhere where rain-charms happened to be employed. In general, while we are wont to estimate a few data in the light of our body of thought, or of our knowledge of the sort of environment where they recur, the ideal of pure research is to view them in the light of their own environment.

¹ An attempt was made by a M. Biot to show that Newton's theological writings were the productions of his old age. But that his mind even in his seventy-fourth year was "quite clear and powerful is sufficiently proved by his ability to attack the most difficult mathematical problems with success" (*Ency. Brit.* vol. xix, p. 591).

² But we should not be likely to remember the alternatives unless we had had an open, enquiring, and unprejudiced mind.

An example of its precariousness.—There exists to-day a school which urges that in ancient times there were certain far-reaching and characteristic conceptions of the Universe, by understanding which we shall have the key to religious, mythological, legendary, historical, and other data. We have only to realize the existence of this ancient, Oriental, astral-mythological system and grasp its significance, and we have a clue to ancient belief and practices. Just as a human bone unearthed in course of excavation in some early stratum is a proof of the existence of man, so, according to this school, data identical or analogous to those in this great system presuppose its presence.¹ It is as though every idea of a Trinity presupposed Christianity, and that of some particular type. The gigantic system would explain the dress in which is clad practically every conception in Babylonian teaching and in the teaching of other ancient civilizations. The discovery would indeed be enormously important if it could be proved. It is certain that there was a way of looking at things very different from ours; it has prevailed among the ancients, and still prevails among savages to-day, and since both the savages and the ancients were rational in other respects, it is no exaggeration to say that could we discover their outlook or get a clue to their consciousness, it would profoundly affect our conceptions of the development of thought. And this is clearly recognized by the school in question.

The source of the fallacy.—But notice the fundamental fallacy.² It has a problem to solve, and it solves it by the discovery of a great body of thought or system, which, however, has no separate existence, but is really based upon a great many data and inferences of very

¹ See A. Jeremias, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East* (1911), vol. i. pp. x, 4 *sqq.*, etc.

² It must be remembered that when one refutes a theory or hypothesis one is not refuting the data which it attempts to elucidate: there still remains a problem to be solved.

unequal value. If we find a human bone, why do we presuppose a man? Simply because we know something of anatomy, and recognize that the bone is a human one. We start with the knowledge of human anatomy and the difference between man and the animal. But if we are ignorant of anatomy and engaged upon a problem, we may not build up a number of bones into a skeleton, and use it as the basis for further comparison. We have first to give reasonable proof that this skeleton is a legitimate one; failing that it is open for some one else to construct another skeleton and, with equal plausibility, treat *it* as the type. Herein lies the importance of attending to conflicting views, of understanding different attitudes to the same or to similar data. What this school has done is to weave into one system a variety of phenomena, and to regard other phenomena, identical or similar to these, as presupposing this system. But even if we accept the skeleton we have no right to infer that any bone that would fit it would fit no other. This is to forget the differences and the alternatives. If we found a baby's rattle in a well, would it not be only natural to look there for the feeding-bottle, the cradle, and the baby? They might be there; but since there are other possibilities, we should refrain from premature inferences. The illustration is absurd because we already *know* something about the possibilities; but when we deal with thought, everyday experience presses upon us the obvious fact that we must not leap from the known to the unknown. If two men share certain specific beliefs in politics or religion it does not follow that these beliefs are part of similar bodies of thought; the two may not agree in fundamental points, they may not even agree as to what was fundamental. None the less each would feel that something was fundamental, and where we feel that certain bodies of thought are fundamentally or essentially alike, there is some "skeleton" which we have to discover.

Confusion has been caused in the study of religions by neglecting fundamental differences, and by building up comprehensive systems of world-wide cults. Ophiolatry, or the cult of serpents, is a case in point. *S*, the serpent, is found associated with various features which we may call *abc* or *bcd*, or *ade*, and so on. Consequently, a complete and organic system *Sabcde*, etc., is inferred, and it is presumed to exist when we find only *Sa* or *Sb*, or even merely *ab*, *cd*, etc.¹ This is of course only the most schematic of illustrations, but sufficient, perhaps, to indicate how very convincing and attractive the procedure can appear. But if we turn to trees, we can find the same sort of thing, with the tree taking the place of the serpent. Thus, apart from the exaggerated use of this method, it is soon found to prove too much, and it defeats itself. The systems, however, have a threefold value: (a) they indicate the desire to unify and synthesize; (b) they illustrate the persistent tendency to identify bodies of thought on the basis of a few data, and, what is more important, (c) they point to the fact that there is enough similarity to justify these efforts, that there is some common "skeleton" which needs explanation. The systems or theories may be wrong, but there is an underlying problem, and, as in the case of other fields of research, the failures to solve any problem are not so conspicuous as the fact that the phenomena continue to evoke very similar explanations.²

¹ For example, the several features might be: image or model of a serpent, serpent-myths, belief in a serpent-ancestor, the naming of a clan or child after a serpent, and so forth. We may also illustrate the confusion by supposing that *serp-*, *ser-*, *se-nt*, *s-ent*, etc., must necessarily stand for *serpent*.

² Of all "systems" the most perverse is "Phallus-worship." Based upon evidence for licentiousness in religious cults—sporadic, but occasionally systematic—and with the discovery of a certain meaning which is neither inevitable nor necessary, systems of this sort are still published. They are hardly worth the "evidence" they collect—and this is a criticism that does not apply to the elaborate works on other systems.

The study of differences and resemblances.—Constantly, when we compare the fruits of thought there are resemblances so striking that they may be resented because they seem to destroy an originality which, as we feel, assuredly exists. So, for example, when Christianity is compared with Mithraism, or Christian mysteries with those of non-Christian origin, the data may be misjudged, because we argue that other levels cannot possess that context of thought in which we place the data in question. Or again, influenced by other considerations, we may emphasize or exaggerate the resemblances in order to suggest a similar context or environment. These varying tendencies are frequently encountered when one undertakes a comparison of religious or other thought. For example, the modern evolutionary theory has often recalled the ideas of evolution which prevailed before Darwin's time and even in ancient Greece. The resemblances have been as much denied by some as they have been exaggerated by others; but if they are to be judged, as they should, in the light of their own environment, many of the arguments that have been spun out are quite irrelevant, since the greater the differences of context, the less significant are the resemblances. It is really noteworthy that there were evolutionary tendencies in thought before Darwin appeared; it is also noteworthy that isolated examples can be traced in other lands and ages not immediately connected with our own development. But the two are incommensurable, they belong to different orders of facts, and serve different purposes. When resemblances are emphasized, the more necessary it is to perceive a certain oneness in thought. This is valuable for the comparative study of the human consciousness. But when the real differences are emphasized we have to perceive that this oneness underlies a wealth of expression peculiar to and evolving with its environment. The differences testify to the reality of

movement and development, whereas the resemblances suggest the impossibility of excessive divergence. The one feature must not be isolated from the other. To insist upon the similarity of all religions is to replace an originality which, in the opinion of many, is not essential by a certain common unity which gives a profound significance to the consciousness of man and to religion in general. If, on the other hand, stress is laid upon the differences, it is necessary to realize that, while some features remain constant, there is a steady development of expression which allows the prospect of its continuation. In no case should features in one context be promiscuously interpreted from another in which they seem to reappear. There are the various possibilities to take into account, and the wider our horizon, and the better our acquaintance with varieties of psychical levels—through observation, intercourse, reading, and sympathy—the greater the range that will present itself to us when we proceed to interpret the data. It is for this reason that he who knows the world only through books, or who is unsympathetic towards certain types of humanity, can easily go astray, and that even the traveller or missionary in foreign lands is not necessarily the best interpreter of the savage.

The body of thought estimates.—Our interpretation of data is conditioned by the stage we have reached in the development of our consciousness. Now, in other lands and ages there are ideas and beliefs strongly recalling the theory of evolution. But they belong to other environments which must not be immediately associated with ours.¹ It is futile to speculate whether the Greeks, under other conditions, could have reached more advanced ideas of evolution ; at all events, the theory that now prevails is so closely bound up with knowledge of which they were ignorant that they could not have had the theory in its present fulness. On the other hand, it will

¹ See above, p. 37 *seq.*

be generally admitted that the impression made by certain phenomena upon a few Greeks with a relatively small stock of knowledge is essentially identical with that which has developed in our own environment into the modern theory of evolution. This being so, we may assume that among the Greeks and others the absence of the requisite data and the failure of opportunity were the chief hindrances to progress. On the other hand, in Western Europe the early progress of the theory was actually hindered by the presence of a certain system of thought, also based upon a selection of data. In the one case, the environment of the Greeks did not advance sufficiently with the necessary knowledge; but in the other, knowledge was part of a body of thought hostile to the theory.¹ The possession of a particular outlook or theory thus influences observation, and the individual who cannot divest himself of certain presuppositions comes in between the naïve, fresh, and open-minded observer and the trained, scientific, but unbiased student. As another example may be cited the fact that early untrained but fresh minds and modern trained but detached ones have agreed in recognizing the significance of certain phenomena in the Old Testament which those who were influenced by a particular body of thought either failed to observe or were unwilling to allow. Under the influence of a body of thought we may resent or refuse to admit the many significant resemblances between ourselves and the lower orders, whereas if we turn to savages, and even to certain forms of thought in higher levels, the resemblance or kinship is to a varying extent freely recognized. Once more, modern scientific and detached enquiry confirms the naïve and simple im-

¹ The hostility to Darwin's theories was at first shared by scientists. The opposition on the part of theology is the more intelligible, because theology has wider interconnexions than any of the more specialized fields of thought.

pressions of untrained minds, but sets them upon a different and a sounder basis.¹

A little knowledge is . . .—In general, the primary, spontaneous, free and fresh attitude to phenomena may subsequently be hampered by the possession of some system of thought; but when with increase of knowledge the earlier impressions are justified—and of course this does not always happen—they gain in fulness and value. The naïve and elementary impressions in themselves would be too much out of touch with higher levels of thought, but when we appear to “return” to them, or they appear to come back to us, they are in a form which the higher levels can appreciate. In dealing with “reassertion” in an earlier chapter we had other examples of this process. The process makes for progress (see p. 129 *seq.*). If the naïve intuitive impression is not in accordance with tested knowledge, it is not to be assumed offhand that either the former or the latter is wrong; it is more natural to infer, on all analogy, that the intuition is untrained, and that the knowledge is incomplete. It is to be noticed, also, that if the existence of a particular outlook or body of thought influences our judgment when phenomena are brought to our notice, this outlook or body is not necessarily religious or theological; it may be that of the scientific or rationalistic mind. But the result is the same

¹ To take another simple illustration: children often see how a conjuring trick is performed more readily than the adult, who may certainly possess a larger knowledge of legerdemain but obstinately adheres to his theories of how it is done. The latter comes with a mind prepared, but ill-prepared; the child has only his native acuteness. If the mind suspects that the conjurer has a confederate, or that he keeps the cannon-ball up his sleeve, so to speak, it will be more occupied with its own theories than in looking out for clues. Similarly, in dealing with all problematical situations, everything depends on the ability to find and test clues rather than to force the evidence to agree with one's presuppositions—which may be incorrect. How often in doing a piece of translation a pupil falls below his usual standard, because he starts off with a mistaken translation of the opening words, and, as it were, twists the evidence to the initial theory or starting-point!

in either case, and the wisdom of the many has, as usual, been expressed in the wit of one, when we say that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

Summary.—The effort has been made to show that when we are comparing things we should consider the different contexts or environments, purposes and interpretations. The impression things make upon us is conditioned by our knowledge, and this is the result of a process of conscious and less conscious selection in the course of a still unfinished development. This process is part of a beneficial and economical endowment, in consequence of which we are able to make progress along more or less individualistic lines: no one being able to see a thing with ideal comprehensiveness, but each one tending to bring out certain features or aspects. This is no other than a manifestation of personality or individuality. If our knowledge and way of thinking blind us to some phenomena, they give a fuller meaning to others. Our position is incomplete and fragmentary. We may condemn some phenomenon from our current position, but we cannot categorically deny that it may reappear or reassert itself in some new form. In truth, those individuals who are our evidence for "survivals" may be representing something that, if unacceptable in its present form, may be subsequently appreciated in the same or in another form. After all, the "survival" has survived, and when we look back upon the past we observe that so much has been cast away, that the mere *fact* of "survival" is in itself noteworthy. Now, when we survey modern life we, from our advanced standpoint, regard certain phenomena as "survivals" from some past stage; it will be advantageous, therefore, to turn next and notice a few cases where the "higher" forms have passed away, and where there seems to have been decadence and retrogression.

Apparent retrogression in the East.—Palestine.

Syria, Babylonia, Asia Minor, and Egypt are lands of long-lost civilization; the civilization has disappeared, and although Mohammedanism is the prevailing religion, the ordinary people preserve under its veneer beliefs and practices foreign to it and, indeed, to any other modern religion. The natives may manifest some awe and respect for particular places or rites which belong to the orthodox religions, but at heart they are not in touch with them; their beliefs and customs are rather to be compared with those popular features which the predominating religions in Christian and pre-Christian times denounced or sought to elevate. In Palestine the numerous *welis* or local saints are exactly analogous to the Baals, the local deities or godlings of old, against whom the prophets of Israel inveighed; and there is a persisting and genuine regard on the part of the people for these more immediate and ever-present beings rather than for the great Allah or the Deity of the predominating religions. The religious beliefs and customs, though not identical with those in ancient times, are more akin to the old-time forms than to the distinctive features of the higher religions. The social and legal customs, too, not only find their parallel in ancient times, but correspond with the simpler, more archaic, and more undeveloped usages rather than with those that mark the organizations of the great political-religious powers. From our modern standpoint, the Oriental areas would seem to have witnessed retrogression and decay; whereas Western Europe, although once on a low level of culture, has undergone a lengthy development influenced by the heights reached in these areas and also in ancient Greece and Rome.¹ But that evolution of religious thought,

¹ In our progress we reach points where we can gain from the highest levels in olden times. Not until a certain stage of development is reached can one profit from a Plato or an Aristotle; but the environment that can no longer carry on the work to a higher point evidently undergoes some deterioration.

which, starting in the East, takes us from the Old Testament, through the New Testament and Jewish Rabbinism, and culminates in modern Christianity and Judaism, is the evolution of bodies of beliefs, and not of environments. The two are not to be confused (see p. 38). In all complex societies there are the relatively higher and the relatively lower levels of culture, but the former represent, as it were, the high-water mark of the environment and its age, and we cannot estimate from it the character of the environment as a whole. This is clear when we observe that the ancient religions in the Bible lands unmistakably show endeavours to reform the contemporary crude and lowlier beliefs and customs, and to set them upon a higher level.

Apparent reversion to earlier conditions. — Now, the historical vicissitudes prove that the domination of Hittites, Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, while influencing the culture and civilization to a greater or less extent, did not strike deep. There is abundant evidence for the strength of Greek and Roman influence in Palestine, but when in course of time the political map changed, old features reappeared. Thus the Beth-Shean of the Old Testament, later well known as Scythopolis, appeared once more as Beisan, and other examples could be given to illustrate the retentiveness of folk-memory, folk-custom, and folk-belief. The exotic culture had not gone down to the roots of the people, and it is very instructive to notice that, although certain forms of belief and cult have disappeared, between the old and the new there is a distinct religious-psychological relationship. It is true, we find among the *welis* and saints a Saint Elijah and names of Arab or Turkish heroes; the traditions, also, may sometimes be certainly or probably connected with features of mediaeval or modern times. But there is a noteworthy similarity in the character of all these local beings, which is far more significant than

the more superficial differences. When in the course of history the period of culture and civilization passed away, we have no reversion to an earlier stage, but a disappearance of certain earlier and more elevated forms, and a more distinctive reassertion of that which in the past had been elevated and otherwise re-expressed. The efforts to stamp out the local cults in both ancient and modern times met with no lasting result ; and although to-day the cults may be looked upon with disfavour, they persist as significant illustrations of the way in which people insist upon expressing their genuine wants. It is natural to recall the cult of saints in Roman Catholic districts. Once more there are features contrary to strictly orthodox opinion, but the peasantry enjoy a feeling of immediate relationship with the divine or semi-divine beings, which is essentially identical with that manifested in the eastern veneration of the *welis*. And this is to be emphasized. The cult of the peasant is characterized by a vivid immediacy between his environment and the local being who is felt to be more distinctly interested in the environment than the more powerful though undoubtedly somewhat remote Deity who rules the world. The beliefs and customs may be exceedingly crude and lowly, but they are actuated by this feeling of confident reliance upon a near being who has at heart the progress of his small circle of clients. No one who studies the world's religions can fail to recognize that one of the most fundamental features is this craving for an immediate relationship with an Unseen Power or Being whom the more established religions tend to make somewhat remote and inaccessible.

Survivals and orthodoxy.—Now, whether or no the modern local cults and their various features are "survivals" depends upon the attitude of the enquirer. From the orthodox Mohammedan or Christian standpoint they are "survivals," they have no organic connexion

with the official religion ; they may be looked at askance, or repudiated, or indeed there may be a sort of reinterpretation that justifies or at least tolerates them. In so far as the local beings bear the name of Elijah or of some well-known or reputable Mohammedan or Christian figure, they have an air of orthodoxy which can be deemed all-sufficing. From the popular point of view, of course, the cults are not "survivals" ; they are the natural and normal expression of feelings which, it is evident, the higher religions do not satisfy. Thus, if we judge them in their own light, we shall conclude that though they may be "survivals" from an orthodox standpoint, it is rather the names (in such cases as the above) and other more external features which really deserve to be so styled.

Psychical similarity underlying the differences.

—A comparative study of the prevailing religions of ancient and modern times, with the literature reflecting the beliefs and customs of the higher levels, speedily discovers that they presuppose lowlier forms which are sometimes retained. We look below the positive influences of the religion and of the social organization during the ages of culture and civilization to features which, as comparison shows, are peculiar to no single time or place. There is throughout a persisting *psychical* similarity, with differences which are more especially the result of the positive influences, and are local, tribal, or national, but relatively transitory. There is a common feeling of a need for maintaining some relationship with the Unseen, but it is very differently expressed and directed by the orthodox and by the unorthodox, by the priest, by the prophet, or by the peasant. Reformers in ancient and modern times, influenced by their own body of thought, have been unwilling or unable to recognize the essential and underlying points of contact between themselves and the other levels. The inability to recognize

this fundamental relationship has sometimes led to failure, and their efforts to reform have been only temporarily successful. On the other hand, it has also led to the conspicuous advances which attract the attention of the historian and the theologian. If the general course of events in Bible lands down to the present day shows the persistence of a somewhat similar type of thought apparently untouched by the civilizations and religions of predominating powers, it is only necessary to turn to the differences between the popular thought of to-day and that of the past to perceive that there have been *some* permanent changes which indicate a positive advance. But in these lands of four millennia of history we can descry no continuous line of ascent culminating in present conditions. "The fundamental religious conceptions have from time to time been elevated and ennobled by enlightened minds; but what European culture was unable to change in the age of Greek and Roman supremacy, influences of Oriental origin could not expel. Official cults, iconoclastic reforms, and new positive religions have left the background substantially unaltered, and the old canvas still shows through the coatings it has received."¹ The common material expresses itself in forms which, from our standpoint, we consider now relatively high and now relatively low. There is a similarity underlying the differences, there has been no continuous upward evolution, and our view of the "survivals" depends on our standpoint.

The "survival" versus the system of thought.—We have to put aside ordinary chronological and historical considerations and recognize that in some particulars a modern land may be sociologically simpler and more

¹ The writer's *Religion of Ancient Palestine*, p. 114. See also the discussion in his essay, "The Evolution and Survival of Primitive Thought," in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, ed. E. C. Quiggin (1913), pp. 375 sqq.

archaic than it was in the past. Where we recognize features that have come down from the past we usually find that they are of a sort suitable to various levels, or that they have been adjusted to the different conditions. A highly complex law or religion would be useless in a relatively simple community where there is not that differentiation which comes from the presence of many varieties of individuality. In like manner, relatively simple beliefs and practices, as, *e.g.*, those in the Mosaic legislation, would by themselves be quite inadequate for such a land as ours.¹ There is throughout a certain co-ordination of thought and practice, which, after all, is only to be expected; but sometimes the general conditions are more rudimentary (as, *e.g.*, at the present time), and sometimes they are more advanced (as, *e.g.*, in the days of the old civilizations). The recurrence of this co-ordination is to be noticed; it means that a fairly co-ordinated system of thought prevails throughout the environment. Now, when the current custom and thought do not answer the needs of life there are two tendencies: one to elaborate and develop them, the other to depart from them and find a speedier and more individualistic solution. In the latter case, the customary thought and behaviour will be ignored, and the steps taken, if persistent and more widespread, would disintegrate society. In resort to "lynch law" we have an example of what may stimulate the development of law, but is not part of the current system of behaviour. It is rather an expression of individualistic feeling, taking a form which the current system could not long tolerate. It lies outside the successive stages in the development of co-ordinated thought; it may influence that development, but it can hardly be a true example of "survival."²

¹ In Palestine itself they were supplemented by the Rabbinical law in later times.

² Neither lynch law nor any discordant phenomenon can be regarded as representing a stage of evolution or development prior to cohesion

Survivals in civilized lands.—In the light of the foregoing we may now turn to the civilized lands and consider the significance of those features in them that rank as “survivals.” Now, it has been shown by the German folk-lorist Mannhardt, and more especially within recent years by Sir J. G. Frazer, that there are certain features in the harvest and other agricultural customs of Europe which are relics of elaborate beliefs and ceremonies of non-Christian origin. It is unnecessary to dilate upon the extent to which Christianity in Europe has embraced a great variety of features which are of pagan origin; it is enough that, since the customs in question have lost their earlier and fuller significance, are no longer part of a context or body of belief which allows us to explain them, and are in Christian lands, they may rightly be called “survivals.”¹ On the other hand, if they were felt more or less vaguely to be proper and desirable, or if they were associated with ideas of fellowship, merriment, relief, and the rest, we can hardly say that they have no context. That they persisted so long apart from their original context would suggest that they must have satisfied some feeling whether more or less unconsciously experienced or consciously expressed and formulated. We all do certain things for reasons which we do not necessarily state to ourselves, and it is an unsafe procedure to assume

and co-ordination. That is to say, disorder may cause development but it does not develop into order; it presupposes a prior order or system. There is no need for any theory that absolute chaos preceded system or order, but there is enough evidence for systems of an extremely rudimentary sort which disintegrate and pass into a higher order. Lynch law could hardly be a survival of actual conditions, because every group as such adheres unconsciously to certain rules and laws; yet because it manifests behaviour which one seeks to regulate, this impresses us as a survival from the past. So, too, a continued desire to improve will suggest an earlier state wholly evil.

¹ Although the term is frequently employed somewhat loosely, according to each writer's standpoint, the usual suggestion is that the feature in question is either in a context different from that which it once had, or that it now has no true context at all.

that because of this they are purely external or formal. In other words, when we have to consider the context of "survivals," it does not necessarily follow that there is no meaning because the need for introspection, self-examination, and the formulation of one's motives has not been felt. The more remote and subconscious side of ourselves plays a large, unrealized, and—in those cases which were mentioned earlier (p. 152)—an exceedingly beneficial part in our development.

The "appendix" and other types of survival.—

In the study of the history of ethics, institutions, and legal customs, one encounters innumerable features which can be traced back to times when our civilization was at a lowlier stage, or which find parallels or analogies among ancient peoples and modern savages. But to speak of them as "survivals" would be to suggest that they belonged to another body of thought, and were now out of touch with life, and were no longer serviceable. A lowly ancestry alone does not characterize a "survival." If so, the appendix and wisdom-teeth in ourselves might be regarded as "survivals" of a troublesome kind, although the backbone in turn has a lowly ancestry, and, on the same analogy, would be a "survival." When we read of "survivals," therefore, the question is raised of the present function of the feature and its place in the environment; is it useful? is it harmful? A simple test is to ask whether it can be eliminated. There are many harmless survivals in language, in children's games, and in clothing, and these could, if necessary, be eliminated; although one shudders to think of the amount of change required should some ultra-rationalist demand the elimination of our words and phrases not in harmony with modern knowledge. In legal and other customs there is also much that could be called a "survival," but this would depend entirely upon the opinion of individuals. It would depend upon the place of the alleged "survival"

in its present environment and upon its place in the individual's body of thought. So, if we consider the House of Lords, it dates from an environment different from the present, but whether it is a survival of the "appendix," the "backbone," or of any other type, rests entirely upon the place it holds in the thought of different individuals. It is not otherwise when a religion is concerned, *e.g.* Christianity. It has features of lowly ancestry, but whether they are "survivals," and whether they can be eliminated, are questions which will be answered differently. While one man might look upon them as an "appendix," to another they would be a veritable "backbone"; and it is not a proof that they have even lost their value simply because some may view their elimination with complacence or even satisfaction.

Different attitudes to them.—Those who know can see in the Maypole or in the game "London Bridge" true "survivals" of remarkable non-Christian practices. But presumably no one would dream of interfering with what has admittedly a different context of thought and spirit. So, too, when in modern religious ceremonies some can see "survivals," the fundamental question is of context. One may readily combine an appreciation of the games of a child with a knowledge of their ancestry; the combination gives a deeper realization of the evolution of thought. And similarly, although one's anthropological knowledge may readily be excited by witnessing religious ceremonies, we should greatly err if we suppose that it is necessarily relevant to those who place them in another context. No doubt knowledge of this sort can have a distressing effect upon some observers; but this has also been the case with our knowledge of the lowly ancestry of man. Knowledge invariably brings some drawbacks, but if it seems to entail a loss of some values, past history shows that there are profounder values waiting to be discovered. The lowly ancestry of

the highest religions is an indisputable fact ; but these contain true "survivals" only when that which made them "survivals" of the "backbone" type ceased to move. The more humble the ancestry, the more significant the points of contact with different psychical levels, the greater, also, is the power of growth.

Misunderstanding can lead to "magic." — The attitude of observers who are unsympathetic to any particular religious ceremony is extremely instructive. The attitude depends upon their interpretation of the phenomena in the light of their own body of thought. If it will be granted that the ceremonies persist because they satisfy certain types of mind, it is evident that such observers can see no meaning in them or a meaning plainly different from that which evidently led others to persist to take part in them. They cannot see in them the meaning they have for those who participate ; they may be of a different religion, or non- or anti-religious, but they necessarily estimate from their own standpoint. But this has been confined to no single age or land. The impression made by the phenomena has often led to the assumption that the value of the ceremonies evidently lay in the ceremonies themselves. It is not unlike this when the child's conception of the soldier, physician, clergyman, or king is confined mainly to purely external forms of behaviour and dress. In this way ceremonies have often lost all their original psychical value for the participants, and some light is thus thrown upon that very common transition in religions where the "religious" aspect has been replaced by the "magical." The clergyman, the physician, the soldier, and the king are individuals who have an interrelated complex of ideas and behaviour, but it is easy for those who do not understand this complex to attach importance only to that which impresses itself upon the senses ; and in any discussion of those features which are usually placed under the heading of

“ Magic ” the question of the character of the underlying ideas and their relation to the more external phenomena is fundamental.¹

Movement of thought is experimental.— Further, the failure to understand the inward significance of the external phenomena, instead of leading to a certain decadence, can be profoundly beneficial in that it tends to the purification or elevation of thought. The more one sees “ eye to eye ” with another, the more ready is one to tolerate that which appeals to him ; and if we saw things with the full meaning which they have to our opponents they would presumably cease to be our opponents. Sympathy is necessary to criticism but can blunt it. Sympathy, toleration, and acquiescence can easily be carried to excess ; and if man had always acted on the assumption that things that persist must answer a real need and must therefore be left untouched, his thorough-going pragmatism would have been fatal to any progress. On the other hand, when we judge things in the light of our own body of thought, and act upon the authority which our consciousness lends us, there is equal risk of danger. A man may, if he choose, suppress judgment ; but directly he proceeds to estimate he may misunderstand, misinterpret, and misjudge. He may fail to see the value of that which he condemns, he may fail to understand the needs and claims of the environment. He may find in his own mind values greater than those offered him by his environment, but he may appear to be as much a failure as the isolated and eccentric figures in the past history of some field of research. All these are experimenters working out their own development and more deliberately controlling their psychical endow-

¹ By “ Magic ” is meant, in general, the beliefs and practices that are characterized by an ignorance of causation, by the apparent assumption that man can control the powers of nature, and by an attitude towards the supernatural powers which is directly opposed to the religious attitude.

ments; they are the factors which make for change, but there is always the environment to be reckoned with.¹

Function and form.—The discovery that some feature is of lowly ancestry—whether it be a true “survival” or not—is important, because it is evident that in spite of the continuous changes in the growth of an environment, it has not died out or been eliminated. Innumerable features have grown up and have disappeared, but this is not one. In considering it, it is often necessary to ask what changes have ensued in the particular context in which it is found. For example, it is said that the church-bell was originally for the purpose of scaring away demons and evil spirits. If this be true, the practice survives, but with a different function. On the other hand, we may have the same function expressed in different ways: people can be assembled by a bell, a gun-shot, or a rocket. Again, enthusiasm and profound regard are psychologically similar, even though they are aroused by such different personages as a saint, a hero, a monarch, or a popular athlete; in each case one is stirred by personality, or by the ideas associated with the person. Hence any discussion, say, of the “divine right of kings” has a twofold aspect: (*a*) the history of the idea, and (*b*) the psychological reasons which explain its origin and persistence. To take another example. A variety of reasons might be given for respect of property, but there are, on

¹ A very interesting passage in 2 Kings xvii. 22 expresses the point of view, not of the reformer, but of the reformed. King Hezekiah had put down the local cults; how, then, could he trust God when he had taken away the provincial sanctuaries at which the people worshipped? And, indeed, from the theistic point of view, in all religious reform individuals are implicitly acting as though they knew the Divine Will better than their environment. Nay more, all individualistic efforts to influence and improve the environment affect, from the theistic point of view, the relationship already subsisting between it and the Deity. Any belief in an immanent Deity involves the belief that He is interested in the whole and not solely in some of the parts.

the psychological side, feelings of fitness, honesty, etc. ; and these show that the fundamental fact is not the existence of laws or commandments, but that which prompted them in the first instance. So, too, in the discussion of sacrilege, the fundamental fact is not the particular history of particular views, but the innate feeling of individuals manifesting itself in the origination and development of the more intellectualized and systematized ideas.¹ In like manner, the " Blasphemy Laws " may be regarded by some as a survival ; but it is more important to consider analytically the feelings that prompted them, and the fact that the most untutored and vulgar recognize where their consciousness is outraged by what *they* consider blasphemous. In general, the detached, unsympathetic, and ultra-progressive mind will often fail to see the difference between the psychological aspect of some feature and its external aspect, and in endeavouring to " reform " readily fails to do justice to the less fortunate members of his environment.

Meaning and development.—The significant difference between function and form, between an underlying feeling and its external expression, can be illustrated by salutations. In shaking hands, for example, we normally give expression to a feeling which is not peculiar to those lands where this particular form of salutation is in use. This is an excessively elementary observation, but repeatedly it seems as though it is thought that the absence of a particular external feature implies the absence of that feeling which underlies it elsewhere. Likewise it has often been thought, and on insufficient grounds, that the feeling when expressed in a form of which we disapprove is *necessarily* less elevated than it is with us. If in a certain tribe we find that the natives do not greet

¹ That is to say, objection to sacrilege is not based upon laws and enactments, but upon the feelings that evoked and maintained them.

one another with a hand-shake, should we say they were not friendly-disposed? And if they were wont to "rub noses," should we say that their ideas of friendliness were less advanced than ours? Yet, where religion is concerned, attention is often paid to the absence of some features and to the presence of others, regardless of the psychical aspect of such beliefs and practices as the tribe actually possessed. Now, let us suppose that a change ensued in a tribe of savages accustomed to salute one another by rubbing noses. They might begin to drop the old custom because they were becoming less amiably disposed, and if it persisted at all, it would tend to be purely conventional. Or we might imagine that they thought it vulgar; and if in this case they dropped it, they might cease to express their friendliness, because they had only this way of expressing it. Or they might adopt another custom; and some might use one which others would consider even more vulgar. On the other hand, they might be induced to adopt the custom of bowing or of shaking hands; and although *we* might regard this as a distinct advance in manners, the question would arise whether it was an adequate expression of their amiability. We can imagine that bowing would prove too empty a form, and that shaking hands would come into use as a general and effective mode of greeting. This little fancy may help us to understand what has been a very significant factor in the vicissitudes of religions.¹ There have been features which were denounced or condemned; but they could only have arisen in the first instance in response to some genuine feeling. When, however, the need for a change has pressed itself upon the more individualistic members, whom we may call the reformers, the necessity of satisfying the underlying feelings has not always been considered. And when what

¹ The reader can easily find less imaginative examples if he compares the Hampstead Heath Bank Holiday manner with Clapham and Mayfair.

has been offered has been indubitably superior—from *some* evolutionary point of view—but has not given an adequate outlet to the people concerned, they have sometimes retained the old, or they have found an outlet in forms which were equally antagonistic to the aims of the reformers.

The apparent disappearance of an underlying feeling.—So simple and genuine a practice as shaking hands may often, of course, be purely conventional, but evidently it persists not on that account, but because of the continued desire to express a certain feeling. Whatever persists does so in response to some feeling of fitness—however vague or even trifling—and only as the feeling weakens is it likely to die a natural death.¹ Needless to say, mere persistence is not in itself an argument against change, else there would never be any development from lower forms of expression to higher ones. Further, if we agree that persistence or survival points to a certain feeling, whether conscious, subconscious, latent, or implicit, the disappearance of a specific form or expression will always raise the question whether it is or is not replaced by another. If a tribe of savages ceased to greet one another by rubbing noses, their feeling of friendliness might atrophy, or it might manifest itself in another form. Trivial exercises of the imagination such as these

¹ No doubt many features persist as habits, but the question is whether there is what may be called a "psychical accompaniment." Our inability or our failure to recognize the existence of some feeling does not prove that it is absent, and it may be urged that in every habit there must be something verging on feeling. It is well known that a feeling of fitness, or value, or the like, will only manifest itself when the feature is attacked, endangered, or in some way made prominent. In this case it passes into consciousness, as it were, and it may be argued that previously the feeling had been latent or implicit. For logical reasons it is exceedingly difficult to understand the *sudden* appearance of a feeling, unless it had already had some existence, the whole theory of evolution is inimical to the notion of any creation out of nothing. Hence, in suggesting that there is a "psychical accompaniment," nothing is asserted touching its intensity, variability, character, etc., it is only urged that *some* feeling is involved.

show us that just as the same external form may have different meanings, so also the same underlying feeling may have different forms of expression, and that the disappearance of a particular external form does not necessarily prove that the underlying feeling has atrophied. This is eminently true in dealing with the vicissitudes of religion. From a study of ancient and modern Palestine we are impressed by the desire of the native to enter into immediate relationship with a supernatural Being, nearer to him than the orthodox Deity. But we do not find this feeling in orthodox Judaism. Has it disappeared? or does it not really reflect itself in the theory of intercessors, divine agencies, and the like, who join man with the supreme but somewhat remote Almighty? ¹ So, too, if we have reason to suppose that a certain feeling is distinctively characteristic of a large number of religions, should it appear to be absent anywhere, we may ask whether the feeling is really absent or whether it takes some other form apart from or even antagonistic to the religion. Veneration or respect for the dead is a useful illustration; it appears so widely distributed that where it is wanting there seems to be a conspicuous gap. Now, it is interesting to notice that, although it has not prevailed as a cult in ancient or modern Palestine, the local being is often regarded as an ancestor, and this particular expression of the feeling finds an analogy when in earlier times it would seem that the patriarchal ancestors were viewed in popular belief as semi-divine powers.

¹ See, for example, Oesterley and Box, *The Religion and Worship of the Synagogue*, chap. ix. ("Intermediate Agencies between God and Man"); F. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie* (1897), chap. xiii. ("Mittlerische Hypostasen"). The evidence these writers adduce is very instructive for the reshaping of this feeling under the influence of early Jewish theology. When it is objected that the intermediate agencies possess no special importance (see C. G. Montefiore, *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1908, xx. 349), this is the natural estimate from the more elevated standpoint, and may be compared with that of orthodox Mohammedanism to the local *welis* or of Roman Catholicism to the cults of the saints.

Finally, if at certain periods religion itself seems to be weak, feeble, and in danger of decay or death, we have to ask, as before, whether the feeling which had once caused its persistence is or is not manifesting itself in other forms which, though without the characteristics of religion, are those which religion has comprehended in the past. Dealing as we are with individuals, we have to ask in other words whether the man who from being religious becomes non- or anti-religious entirely loses that feeling which had found its expression in his earlier religious beliefs and customs, and whether men who are non- or anti-religious manifest feelings psychologically akin to those that characterize the religious.

Conclusions.—I. In point of fact, objective comparison frequently finds essential resemblances between the distinctively religious, the artistic and poetical, the philosophical, and others. Indeed, either religion and the religious must be placed in a separate psychical compartment, or there are natural points of contact with what lies outside the category. The psychological and biological study of men compels us to pay attention to the features shared by all sorts of individuals, and it is necessary to regard religious individuals, the religious side of individuals, and all the data that we label "religious," as parts of some larger and interrelated whole. Although all men share some things in common there are conspicuous differences, and from a classification of certain types of differences we distinguish between the religious, the non-religious, and the anti-religious.¹ Our estimate depends on our experience, knowledge, temperament, etc.; and this whole body of feelings and ideas and so forth enables us to estimate one man as "advanced" or "extreme," while another is our evidence for some "survival." Now, this great psychical body or world is inextricably bound up with ourselves. But it undergoes modification, change,

¹ Unfortunately the second and third are often illogically confused.

and development. It is not precisely what it was five or ten years ago ; and we cannot conceive what it was like when we were very young. Nor can we imagine what it would be like if, by chance, it were to undergo some considerable development, say, as significant as that it has already undergone. On the other hand, the underlying self is conscious of its identity with the self of five, ten, or more years ago. *It* does not change, and since the psychical body or world undergoes change, not only can we distinguish between the two, but we can understand that the Self may express itself differently as it develops. This analysis is confirmed by the comparative study of religious data. Here we encounter beliefs and practices representing the expression of individuals. Two may be fundamentally alike in some particular, in spite of the different way in which they express themselves ; on the other hand, the similar expression, or external datum, may represent different underlying impulses, needs, aims, or " psychical accompaniments."

II. Every allegation of a " survival " involves (*a*) our own body of thought, which views the datum as a survival because of the place it holds in us and the meaning it has for us ; and (*b*) its own context, the place it holds in the individual who is our evidence, and the meaning it has for him. The fact that in our judgment the datum is easily eliminable does not prove that it is equally eliminable in his body of thought, and if we suppose that " survivals " persist, as it were, automatically or mechanically, either (*a*) we offer an explanation which we should repudiate if applied to beliefs or practices we valued, or (*b*) we beg the question in assuming that they persist without any feeling of value or utility—" psychical accompaniment." The doctrine of " survivals " affords an extremely easy solution, but it cuts the knots. If the " survivals " have survived from a savage or semi-civilized past, why should we not also retain from the past some of the

rational beliefs and practices of our ancestors? The doctrine, if logically pursued, proves its absurdity. Based upon a notion of the ever-increasing rationality of men, it thoughtfully ascribes all irrational features to the past, as though the earlier steps in the growth of civilization were hewn by our more irrational ancestors—as though the advances in the beginning of culture were made by men far more illogical and irrational than their successors who carried on their works. Besides, the doctrine involves remarkable notions of the inheritance of beliefs and practices, as though individuals were born with ideas ready to present themselves as the occasion arose. If, on the other hand, it be argued that they may be born with certain tendencies to adopt certain beliefs and practices that may be dubbed "survivals," the doctrine stands on another footing. In this case we can distinguish between an innate, natural, or inherited tendency and the particular expression of it.¹

III. The comparative study of religions, and the psychological study of religious, philosophical, poetical, and other thought, combine to support such a view as this. The correlation of resemblances and differences strongly suggests that while psychical differences may be due to individual and environmental factors, the resemblances may be explained (*a*) by more external and environmental considerations—*e.g.* life in the same group, or (*b*) by the fundamental similarity of all men. The problem of the extent of this psychical similarity remains. All are born with certain similar instincts, impulses; all share some similar physiological, psychological, and psychical features. Either one may venture to say that among these is a

¹ Mr. H. S. R. Elliot, *Modern Science* (pp. 196 *sqq.*) makes a similar distinction when he says: "We seem, therefore, to be justified in assuming that beliefs are the outcome of a congenital disposition. The individual is born with a certain mode or tendency to belief; and if during life he is brought into contact with theories harmonious with that tendency, he is likely to accept them" (p. 199).

tendency to religion, or one may more safely urge that men have similar tendencies which express themselves in a way externally different, in religion, poetry, philosophy, etc. Although the former may be correct, the latter is, for the present, a sounder view, because it can perhaps be shown by objective comparison. On this view, then, men are ultimately of one psychical type, and there is no absolute difference between the most thorough-going of rationalists and the most sublime religious mystics—both are different examples of the same physiological and psychical species.

IV. Finally, the distinction between the individual and his ever-growing world of thought is a piece of analysis made for convenience of study. The latter is our clue to the former, but the former has no real existence apart from his psychical realm. When we talk of the development of Religion, Ethics, Science, and so forth, we move in the world of thought, which only becomes real when we remember that we are dealing with innumerable individuals. All argument must constantly be checked by reference to the individual, who is more real than either his thought or that of his environment (p. 80, note). There is a subtle but important difference between the individual and his beliefs and practices, because the general evolution of thought has depended not merely upon the character of the individual, but also upon the particular expression. We should agree that, although noble qualities in a savage are not to be despised, it would be unfortunate if our civilization adopted both his qualities and his beliefs and practices. We recognize that the energies of some men are worthy of a better cause, and the sincerest men have not hesitated to thwart, imprison, and men kill equally sincere, whose beliefs and practices differed from their own. Qualities and attributes admirable in themselves may be less so in certain concrete cases, and the progress of all that goes to make

up civilization depends both on the more abstract qualities and the more concrete beliefs and practices. Thus we implicitly distinguish between (*a*) all that pertains to the purely psychical side of man, all that we call "human nature," all that can be handled psychologically, and (*b*) the beliefs and practices which characterize individuals and environments and allow us to form conceptions of the development of civilization. The distinctive, characteristic, and differentiating features "overlie" a common "substratum" which can be distinguished by analysis, and every individual can be analysed in this manner. Thus, in the study of survivals we deal with individuals who present certain peculiarities which attract our attention because they contrast with our ideas. Apart from the question whether they are rightly styled survivals, the phenomena have a twofold aspect: they are external expressions which are comparable with but differ from our own ideas, and they proceed from individuals, in various respects similar to us. The evidence for survivals proceeds from individuals who are noteworthy for the points in which they differ from us. This ignores the points of resemblance. But the differences are important for their bearing upon the character and development of bodies of thought, and these are significant for the character and development of civilization.

CHAPTER VI

SURVIVALS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

II. EXAMPLES

Death and the Supernatural. — The preceding pages have prepared the way for an examination of "survivals," and will have indicated the necessity of viewing with some caution the rather free way in which they are usually handled. Although it will be impossible to notice all the types of "survival" that have been adduced at one time or another, those that will come up for consideration are perhaps sufficiently characteristic. The main object of the pages that follow is to suggest by independent arguments the method of treatment which seems likely to do greater justice both to the phenomena themselves and to those individuals who are responsible for their appearance or persistence. We may start by recalling the fact that a dispute recently arose in Hungary concerning the right of the public hangman to distribute pieces of his rope, which, it was believed, would be the best of all charms for bringing "good luck."¹ Moreover, only a few years ago, when a motor-omnibus in this country ran into a tree and several passengers were killed, the tree had to be protected by the police from the crowd who endeavoured to remove small fragments of it—just for "luck." Not

¹ *The Observer*, May 5, 1912.

only do people often find a fascination in death and tragedy, but there is a common belief that things connected with death or with the dead are especially efficacious. Death and the dead bring a man into contact with the profound, the unknown, the supernatural; they stir up the more profound side of the consciousness. The features mentioned may appear to be "survivals" in that they do not belong to a coherent system of thought in the environment; yet, since it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find any system of which they were an integral part, they can hardly be said to have survived. On the one hand, if they are "survivals," what original body of thought or system do they presuppose? On the other hand, there is an underlying feeling which is expressed otherwise in a form that is entirely in harmony with the thought of the environment. For example, there is a world-wide belief in the ability of the dead either to mediate on behalf of men with superior supernatural beings or even to perform their work. It may be observed, in passing, that in Sicily there has even been a cult of executed criminals who were thought to be specially powerful mediators.¹ The powers ascribed to relics of the dead and the resort to their tombs are too familiar to need any words. Thus we may postulate an underlying feeling which manifests itself in a variety of ways. The hangman's rope and the tree can hardly be regarded as "survivals," but there is some underlying *fundamental* element that is common to all men and all ages. In some ages and lands human victims have been sacrificed in order to gain some benefit, while in the cases mentioned those already dead are in some way associated with ideas of "good luck." Yet the latter are hardly "survivals" of human sacrifice. The simpler theory is that some fundamental idea finds expression in these varying forms.

¹ E. S. Hartland, "The Cult of Executed Criminals at Palermo," *Folk-lore*, xxi. (1910), 170-179.

No doubt it may be difficult to specify the common element, but the conjecture that there is a more or less indefinite belief in the effectiveness of those who are in the realm of the supernatural finds some support in other data.

The rescue from death.—There is a well-known belief that it is unlucky to rescue drowning men, or to cut down men who have hanged themselves. This is no "survival" in the sense that there was a time when people in grave danger of death were invariably left to their fate; it seems to be rather a more or less implicit feeling that it is dangerous to interfere with the supernatural.¹ Where ideas of the supernatural are involved heedless behaviour is strongly resented. The particular expression which I have cited is vague; but sometimes it is in a more organic connexion, part of a system of thought. In the Solomon Islands, if a man falls into a river and is attacked by a shark, he is not allowed to escape; and should he reach the shore, he is thrown back into the water, the belief being that a supernatural power, the god of the river, had marked him out as its own. Even among the sailors of the Orkney and Shetland Islands it was deemed unlucky to rescue a man from drowning, since the sea was entitled to certain victims, and if disappointed would avenge itself on those who interfered.² To generalize, we may say that the supernatural was powerful and could be beneficial, but it had rights and was to be respected. Now, some such formula as this pervades all religion.

Traditions of sacrifice.—Next, we may notice that folk-lore provides many examples of the belief that

¹ The hesitation where ideas of the supernatural are involved finds a more decided expression in the abhorrence of desecration, sacrilege, and blasphemy. Note that a line is drawn somewhere, but to the external observer it is not an absolute one. See above, pp. 31 *sqq.*, on the term "supernatural."

² See Sir G. L. Gomme, *Ethnology in Folk-lore* (1892), p. 73.

it is dangerous or unlucky to venture near certain pools, and that certain pools, streams, or wells should receive offerings of pins, rags, etc., in return for which some benefit or good luck might be anticipated.¹ Now, since features of this description elsewhere belong to thoroughly organic cults, it might seem to be a natural assumption that the sporadic and attenuated beliefs and practices in civilized lands are true "survivals" of similar or no less organic cults. Let us examine the data more closely. The danger to human life is sometimes more vividly expressed. Thus, the river Ribble had a spirit called Peg O'Neil, identified with a headless image, and every seven years, unless a bird, cat, or dog was drowned in the stream, it was believed that some human being would assuredly fall a victim.² To understand this evidence aright, we must first observe that the name Peg O'Neil and any traditions of her are, as is frequently the case, of secondary origin.³ Next, human sacrifice to spirits of wells and waters is a familiar feature, and only as thought develops do we find the human victim replaced by an animal. If we presuppose a definite cult of some water-spirit whose favours were sought at the expense of the periodical sacrifice of some victim, and originally a human one, the evidence would seem to admit of an explanation. It is intelligible that the recollection of ancient rites should linger on in out-of-the-way localities, becoming more and more vague, and undergoing various alterations as traditions changed; and the supposition in question would find abundant confirmation in a comparison of the folk-lore of civilized lands with actual practices in ancient or in modern savage lands.

¹ See more fully, Gomme, *op. cit.* pp. 73 *seq.*

² Gomme, p. 77.

³ The psychological aspects are independent of the particular tradition which explains and perpetuates the belief; cf. p. 178 *seq.*

Analysis of the features.—But it is obvious that the persistence of such traditions, fears, and beliefs in the efficacy of certain wells implies a certain readiness to accept and maintain them. Evidently there are certain types of minds prepared to assimilate and continue features which are no longer in harmony with the general level of thought. On the other hand, it is no less obvious that where we encounter the actual organic cults or presuppose them at some stage in the history of civilized lands, the whole level of thought there was on a more or less similar plane. *There* they were not “survivals.” All will agree that the fear of certain springs, their danger to human life, and offerings of pins and rags are features that may justly be called “superstitions”; but if we wish to understand them we must analyse them more carefully. The feeling, however vague, is that of some power associated with certain waters or wells, offerings may or must be made to them, they may be in some more or less vague way beneficial, but they have certain claims. There are, in fact, three different features: (a) there is the evident recognition of *something* which is definitely associated with this stream or this well and not with any other; (b) this stream or well can be helpful to man, and (c) for this purpose there are certain claims which must be recognized.

Their relation to definite cults and religions.

—Now, however vaguely this *something* be apprehended, even if it be merely connected with ideas of “luck,” it is clearly something beyond and outside man. It belongs to the “supernatural” order, and, in fact, this is at once seen in the more organic cults where definite spirits and demons are admitted. In the backwaters of civilization, the ideas are crude and vague; but in cults which are more in harmony with the environment, the spirits are powerful and beneficial, resembling deities, givers of good, avengers of wrong, recipients of sacrifices. The

system of thought in the cult may be crude, but the essence of it is capable of evolution ; this is certain from the history of religion. On the other hand, the sporadic and isolated forms in civilized lands have no clear context, and they astonish us by their divergence from the accepted beliefs and practices of the environment. Only on looking beneath them do they claim our more serious attention by manifesting a vague sense of something supernatural that can be beneficial and that has claims. So far as the general vicissitudes of religion are concerned, we have the contrast between vague localized spirits and a universal Deity : there is throughout a recognition of the benefits which *something* of the supernatural order can bestow ; but there is the great contrast between the ideas of the *sort* of sacrifice which is required in order to please the supernatural power and the loftier conceptions of what is man's duty to his Deity. The evidence we have noticed as "survivals" may be quite out of touch with any present system of thought, but it reflects underlying feelings which are essentially akin to the ideas reflected in the highest religions. The difference is of degree, not of kind ; the supernatural, its powers and its claims are common to both, and the underlying similarity is not more profound than the remarkable differences by which we are at first struck.

Inadequacy of the "survival" theory.—It is very important to recognize that the "survival" theory is not an adequate explanation. Even if we discover that some phenomena have "survived" from an earlier stage, sooner or later we should have to explain their origin and persistence *there*. Accordingly, the appearance of the phenomena in the earlier or more systematic or more organic cults would first require explanation, and the next step would be to ask whether that which explained their presence would also account for their persistence or survival. But it might be

difficult or impossible to trace any link between the survival and its earlier form ; we should at least involve historical connexions, or certain theories of atavism and of the inheritance of ideas. In this case, therefore, the resemblance between the phenomena would be the result of similar underlying causes, although quite independent of one another. For example, the alleged survival in a civilized area would represent a tendency or impulse which elsewhere had become part of a context of more or less systematized beliefs and practices. The real difference between the "survival" doctrine and the above views should be carefully noticed. The former deals only with the bare beliefs and practices and merely compares them, whereas it is a sounder principle to pay regard to the individuals concerned, their common psychical nature, and the various ways in which the environment enables them to express their feelings and beliefs.

Local and departmental powers.—The evidence has introduced us to two features which may be conveniently mentioned here. The first is the particular localization of the supernatural power. The spirit associated in the more organic cults with a certain spot, or the vague power which is ascribed to it in cases of "survival," is not necessarily limited in its influence. Although associated, *e.g.*, with water, its powers are not necessarily restricted in a departmental way. So too in folk-lore, although some well may be considered "lucky," the ideas are not narrowly restricted to "luck" where water is concerned ; it is for "luck" in love, in farming, or even in securing the fulfilment of some wish. Similarly, wherever we have deities of crops, of storms, or of any other departmental aspect, it is not to be assumed forthwith that the god could be beneficial in one department only and no other.¹ True, the partition

¹ See W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 2nd ed. pp. 81 *seq.* The power in question is sometimes specialized, as, *e.g.*, in gods of rain ; at

of natural phenomena or of needs of life among a number of deities or spirits is often found, but this points to a more complex organization of thought and life. In the study of religions it is always important to consider whether the source of appeal is deemed able to assist only to a limited and somewhat departmental extent, or whether the worshipper seeks help in all those things which he cannot do unaided. The local spirits, gods, or godlings which we find scattered over any considerable area may seem minor and subordinate beings, but it is necessary to determine whether they may not be considered as powerful in their little circle of influence as a single national god is in an area which recognizes him and him alone. In this way the area that seems to be polytheistic may really consist of a number of henotheistic systems.¹

The local power is immediate.—Why some supernatural influence should be localized at one particular spot is a question that frequently cannot be answered, but it is a significant fact that very generally the need is felt for some definite localization. The power to whom appeal is made must be accessible to the environment where he is recognized, and it is generally understood that he belongs in a special sense to this and not to another environment. There is a feeling of more immediate relationship between the particular environment and its particular supernatural power, and this feature recurs very frequently (*e.g.*, in the East, cf. above, p. 169). It reappears

other times, the idea is that the deity who is so powerful in one department must be powerful in others. It is interesting to compare this alternation with our attitude to the expert or the specialist (cf. p. 87).

¹ Henotheism explicitly recognizes one deity superior to other deities or spirits, whereas monotheism holds that there is one and only one deity. In modern Palestine, the orthodox Mohammedanism is monotheistic, but the peasant to whom the local godling is more important than Allah may be said to be henotheistic; and the outside observer who sees the medley of local beings and spirits might be tempted to call the area polytheistic!

in the higher religions and takes a special form which the student of religions is obliged to notice. Just as the comparative method does not start by assuming that one religion is true and another false, or that religious beliefs and customs are right or wrong, so it cannot assume that a supernatural power, which in one environment is felt to be an immediate reality, in another is non-existent, because it is expressed in a form which the first environment would repudiate. Now this immediacy can be interpreted psychologically as the in-felt conviction of the nearness of the supernatural power which is otherwise located outside, as it were. A feeling of awe and sublimity at some beautiful scene is due to the psychical nature of the individual and the character of the spot where the feeling is aroused. But the feeling could be aroused by other beautiful scenes, and that individual would err if he supposed that exile or emigration would deprive him of his happiness. Often in religion, when religious feeling has been closely associated with particular localities, removal from the area has been regarded as removal from the supernatural being of that area. In this way, the man who is driven away from one land to another can no longer venerate the gods of his land, but must "serve other gods."¹ In another land the religious feeling is bound up with the gods of that land; and since objective comparison shows fundamental similarities in religious beliefs and practices, it is evident that we must distinguish the purely psychical aspect of individuals who hold similar underlying religious beliefs from the very conspicuous differences between area and area, sect and sect. The feeling of an immediate relation with the supernatural power venerated in the beliefs and practices of the area or the sect is the profoundest of all realities, but it is important to observe that in the character

¹ Cp. 1 Samuel xxvi. 19. One common alternative has been to take some material object that aroused the appropriate feeling.

of the beliefs and the practices we see something of the change and development that make all the difference between the "highest" religions and those which we might call the "lowest" (cf. p. 187).

The development of the conception of God.—From the religious point of view an enquiry into religions would be conditioned by our conceptions of God; in the "comparative method" of research, on the other hand, it is simpler and safer to gain some idea of supernatural beliefs in general. To some minds this procedure may seem distressing: there is a certain irreverence in the free association of crude and elevated beliefs of the supernatural. Yet they may be reminded that such impartial investigation is usual and that it has already given greater fulness to conceptions of God.¹ But there is another consideration which it is impossible to ignore. And it is this. Those who hold any theistic standpoint, and are cognizant of the history of their own religion, will agree that the sincerest religious convictions have not excluded beliefs and practices of which they would not approve. There has been a development of conceptions, and God has not confined Himself to those only who have worshipped Him in a way of which they now approve. The adherents of any religion may feel that they have gained the highest conception of His nature, but, as they would be the first to admit, this has been only in the course of their own development from childhood onwards, and of the development of the religious and non-religious thought of their environment. Although God is the God of His worshippers, if He is the God of the Universe, He is the God of all ages and of all peoples, and it is not for man to lay down the limits of His working. If He is the God of

¹ I may refer in particular to Principal F. B. Jevons, *The Idea of God in Early Religions* (1910); W. St. Clair Tisdall, D.D., *Christianity and Other Faiths: an Essay in Comparative Religion*, in the "Library of Historic Theology" (1912); Rev. D. C. Owen, *The Infancy of Religion* (1914); and Rev. J. A. Macculloch, *Comparative Theology* (1902).

the whole, He is the God of all the parts. The idea of a God who has revealed Himself according to the growing consciousness of His worshippers, cannot exclude Him from working on those levels where the beliefs and practices appear excessively crude—this is to forget one's own development and that of one's own religion. The comparative study of religions, therefore, in making its enquiries cannot start from particular conceptions of the Deity, for on these there is divergence of opinion, as also on the far more vital question whether there is a Deity, or what place the Deity holds in the Universe. But it starts on the largest possible basis, and in so doing gives a fuller meaning to the conclusions at which it ultimately arrives. The nature of God is not dependent upon our conclusions: whatever man ultimately finds God to be, all that He has been, all that He is now, however unlovely the religious ideas of others appear to us.

Human sacrifice.—The second feature is the "survival" of a vague recollection of human sacrifice. No one can read through the literature devoted to the comparison of religions without being exceedingly shocked at the prevalence and persistence of human sacrifice even at relatively high levels. The impartial enquirer may, if he will, recollect that susceptibility to actual physical suffering varies widely, that no one can judge precisely the pain of another, and that the thought of some physical pain can be more agonizing than pain itself. This is a question which does not concern us. But it should be noticed that we are dealing with the most profound and most valuable sacrifice that man can offer, and that it is a mistake to suppose that the victim was always some wretched slave or prisoner who would not be much of a loss to the community. Moreover, there was the clearest conviction that death was not the end of the victim's life; human sacrifice was often not merely regarded as in the highest degree acceptable to the supernatural

power, it anticipated an existence which in the thought of the environment was a certainty. On the question of the value of human life the comparative study of religions furnishes much food for thought. It takes us to environments where the relation between the community and the Unseen Order was so convincingly realized that the sacredness we attach to human life was subordinated to the convictions of the Unseen Order. In the course of the evolution of society there has been much destruction of human life that cannot fail to shock us, but it is necessary to bear in mind how commonly the communities we should condemn had the clearest convictions of the supernatural. Human sacrifice was justified, murder was condemned and avenged, alike the valued and the valueless members of the group were sent to their fate, and the fate was bound up with the current conceptions of the supernatural being or beings. There was an organic interconnexion of the beliefs and practices. It is not otherwise when we come to the question of ordeals ; there were dangerous problems which the community could not solve, and there was resort to the supernatural ; it was a religious ceremony, even as great criminals were often executed in a manner that shows that there was the clearest recognition of a real interconnexion between the Seen and the Unseen.

The significance of human sacrifice for ideas of development. — Man has no consistent view of the significance of human or animal life ; he varies from an excessive sentimentalism to a dismaying blood-thirstiness. Now, when one's profoundest feelings are outraged and one's most heartfelt ideals are endangered the reality of the evolution of culture is put to the test. Passion cuts the knot, and it will resort to measures against which progressive thought has always to contend ; self-restraint may seem to make the problem harder, but it is for the further and fuller development of thought and civiliza-

tion. While it is easy for us to look back and appreciate the development in the course of which human sacrifice was reprobated, a grave problem arises when we consider the inception and persistence of the practice. The problem cannot be shirked. We can understand that as man progresses what seemed justifiable and proper may no longer be so—this is a positive fact of real value. It would be a sign of decadence if a civilized area, after reaching a certain stage, assumed that it could with impunity resume what had once been permissible. On the other hand, the desire to maintain a high standard should not allow us to obscure and ignore the past. Though we talk of the follies and the blindness of our youth, we were relatively as wise and prudent as we now are, and when we resort to passion, we implicitly justify behaviour that in our cooler moments we should deplore. If, then, we consider carefully from our higher standpoint the significance of past behaviour we gain a better knowledge that can be fruitfully applied to the future. In this way the free and unprejudiced survey of religious and quasi-religious beliefs and practices which we repudiate is of great practical value for modern religion. Instead of excusing, deploring or ignoring the past, a more objective attitude would be better able to perceive the characteristic features of religious development stage by stage, and to realize the nature of the greatest realities of men at different periods of development. Now, as regards human sacrifice, the familiar Biblical story of Abraham's proposal to sacrifice his son Isaac (Gen. xxii.) is especially significant for the substitution of the animal for the human victim. But no less noteworthy is the evident fact that the legitimacy of human sacrifice was primarily recognized. The human victim had once been in harmony with the religious ideas, and an old Phoenician myth seems to try to justify the grisly practice. While the Biblical story clearly represents a profound advance in man's ideas of

Deity, these ideas also involve the problem of the Deity's relations to man. From the theistic point of view the growth of man's ideas of God cannot be separated from His revelation of Himself. The fact remains that man genuinely thought that human sacrifice was desirable and right, and this affects our conceptions of the Deity's Omnipotence—a problem in itself. But when we consider the transition from the human victim to the animal as a development of man's ideas, a new thought arises. For while man may strive to do the Divine Will, as he conceives it, the fact that his consciousness is still developing allows the expectation that continued development may lead him to recognize that some present belief or practice may be as wrong from a new standpoint as human sacrifice is to us. In this way, the problem of God's relation to man involves the problem of man's effort to perform what seems to be his share in the development, and the question of Divine Omnipotence must be taken with the more positive recognition of Divine patience and human responsibility.

Human sacrifice and life after death.—Another point deserves notice. If the character of the current thought explains the prevalence and persistence of human sacrifice, the origin of the ideas that justify it awaits explanation. At this stage it is enough to observe that there is an instinct in man which clearly is opposed to ordinary ideas of self-preservation. If Nature teaches us self-preservation, and if all our instinctive efforts are to protect ourselves, Nature also reveals even in the lower orders a certain indifference to self-preservation, as remarkable as that instinct or impulse which leads a man to risk or lose his life in the attempt to rescue another. That self-sacrifice is the greatest of offerings and that it is not nugatory are convictions revealed, partly in the cases where it has been practised, unconsciously as it would sometimes seem, and partly in the impression a deed of

this kind makes upon ourselves. Self-preservation is admittedly an extremely beneficial instinct, but self-sacrifice is much more profound; and in that it often seems to manifest itself instinctively, it is entirely opposed to reflective thought which could question the prudence of the deed or the certainty of an existence after death. We must assume the early realization of a vague feeling of continuity and persistence, for only on this assumption can we find a rational and psychological interpretation of those features in the world's religions which in some cases arouse our horror, but in others keenly call forth all our appreciation. We are concerned with a feeling, often a hardly realized one, which underlies a very great variety of expressions, and the primary object is to show that mere ideas of superstition, cruelty, or lust of blood, which may explain some beliefs and customs, cannot explain all.¹ The feeling is there; it has been for the environment to check, train, and elevate it.

Astrological survivals.—As every one knows, many words and phrases are now bereft of that context of thought which they once had. The words "disaster" and "martial," for example, are true survivals inasmuch as they no longer have the suggestion of the fateful influence of the planets that they literally contain. It is evident, however, that they must have arisen in an environment where astrological ideas prevailed. Now, we may note that if some scholar of a remote land were to argue from our use of these words to the general culture of this age, it is *we* who can perceive his error. And if he

¹ Hence, Tennyson may have had a right intuition when he says (*Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*):

"Those that in barbarian burials kill'd the slave, and slew the wife
Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life."

tried to support his theory by reference to the fact that fortune-tellers, palmists, and even astrologers still flourish, again it is *we* who can see that our savant would be very much at the mercy of just such evidence as he happened to obtain or use. But *we* are precisely in the same position when we form an estimate upon the basis of a certain quantity of evidence, irrespective of the standpoints or types of thought it represents.¹ *We* can realize that the words are "survivals," and that the astrological and kindred tendencies are an exceptional feature. But obviously we have next to ask whether these tendencies also are "survivals." Here, however, we have to recognize that there are certain types of individuals who have those attitudes that account for the origin of the words "disaster" or "martial." It is well known that astrological ideas once prevailed in our own environment, and the persistence of these types in an environment where astrology no longer forms part of the general thought, combines with the persistence of those who cater for them, to show that they are not true "survivals," but examples of psychical types which were once more common. So, too, if there is any recrudescence of astrological and kindred tendencies, we must see in it a greater readiness to resort to what was once much more in touch with the ordinary level of thought. The persistence of palmistry, fortune-telling and the like, is the persistence of minds which accept some interconnexion

¹ Those who will take the trouble to compare newspapers representing different political parties will soon realize the grave difference between their impressions based upon one side alone and those when they try *impartially* to apprehend the rival positions. In Old Testament study many of our ordinary views are based upon certain data to the exclusion of others which represent other standpoints (in the widest sense), which in some cases have been almost entirely eliminated by later editors, and in others can be inferred with certainty. One may note also how our estimate of our past, *e.g.* of the feudalism of the Middle Ages, will be based upon a particular selection of data representing particular standpoints.

of the present and the future and of the seen and the unseen.

Unorthodox supernaturalism.—In this respect they are essentially related to all those who recognize a similar interconnexion but repudiate the particular forms these types accept. There are three lines of action : The first is to make a distinction everywhere according to our particular body of thought, and sever the true from the untrue, the good from the bad. This opens the door to individual arbitrariness. The second is to class all together and regard them as alike irrational, and that is the general attitude of those who are opposed to religion and all that is involved in supernaturalism. The third is to recognize an essential similarity in the consciousness manifesting itself in forms some low, others elevated, some out of touch with the general level of thought, others in touch with current religious ideas. No doubt it may seem to some a very serious step to associate the features, but it is already done by those who are opposed to all ideas of the supernatural, and the comparative study of religions has reached that stage where we have to recognize the significance of the trend of intelligent enquiry throughout the civilized world. Now, the interconnexion of present and future and of the seen and the unseen characterizes the world's religions ; it evidently corresponds to an implicit or explicit need felt by the normal individual. But it also manifests itself in forms which are not in harmony with the current religion. In this case it may be that the fault lies more with the current religion than with the individuals. Certainly, if the irrational forms are out of touch with their environment, they may be regarded as an indication of the way in which man insists on finding an outlet along paths which the environment tolerates but does not follow. Yet, if there was no belief in some interconnexion between present and future, between seen and unseen, there would not be these

pursuits which we may style foolish or superstitious, but there also would not be religion, which in the opinion of *one* tendency of modern thought is equally foolish or superstitious.¹ In recognizing this underlying similarity we gain, on the religious standpoint, a stronger conviction of the possibility of elevating a level which is fundamentally akin to our own. We also perceive the great differences that can ensue when certain levels are unable to be in touch with modern thought. Finally, we can realize that the detached line of enquiry, that alone made it possible to discern the relationship between superstition and religion, has pointed the way for the further advance of religious thought: the fact that the same underlying feeling can take forms which may be styled crude or superstitious is not so important for the future as the fact that it exists and can be re-expressed.²

Fairies and spirits.—To take another example of “survival,” we may turn to the belief that still persists among the “lower levels” of civilized lands in the existence of demons, spirits, fairies and the like. This is a “survival” in the sense that the belief is out of touch with the prevailing thought, and that it may often be possible to point to certain details which, on purely

¹ See above, pp. 4, 145, 206.

² The position in the text may be supplemented by reference to the position supported by an orthodox theologian in *Christianity and Other Faiths*, a volume in the “Library of Historic Theology” (1912), p. 16. Dr. W. St. Clair Tisdall points out that “the religious faculty” may degenerate into “a firm belief in ‘luck,’ or in unswerving reliance upon a ‘mascot’ of some sort.” “These,” he proceeds, “are really phenomena of great scientific interest . . . they closely correspond to beliefs in fetishes among negroes of a low type. A man who scoffs at or neglects Christianity but cherishes a ‘lucky sixpence’ is nevertheless a religious man in a way. He has the religious faculty as well as any one else. He has but exchanged belief in the Living God for belief in the omniscience and almightiness of a coin.” Again: “The religious faculty may be misused: so may sight and hearing. It may be turned aside to unworthy objects, as the other faculties too often are. It may become dull or atrophied, just as is often the case with the visual and auditory faculties.”

historical grounds, must go back to ancient times. But we should not find there the belief precisely as it now persists ; what survive are rather the *disjecta membra* of some body or bodies of thought, larger, more organic, and more in harmony with the supernatural ideas of past ages. Again, the belief does not persist as a convention ; rather does it presuppose that there are individuals prepared to keep it alive. As regards fairies, it is obvious that the normal child is able to accept much which normal adults outgrow ; but if the man grows out of his earlier ideas of fairies and the like, he will sometimes also grow out of other beliefs touching the supernatural, which, however, are accepted by some portion, at least, of his environment. Now, it may seem a serious step to associate in one breath a belief in fairies, demons and the like, and beliefs in the Unseen Order which are a living reality to many people. But fairies and demons are no less a reality to others, and not children alone, and the study of religions has reached that point where, in its own interest and in the interest of religion itself, it is necessary to approach quite impartially all the data of the more profound side of the human mind. The question of the validity of any of these beliefs does not arise now ; what is fundamental is the existence—*the normal existence*—of types of consciousness whose outlook is such that they are ready to accept certain ideas offered by their environment. We may estimate from the standpoint of the environment and regard an adult belief in fairies or demons as a “ true survival ” ; but to many people religious beliefs will stand upon another footing owing to their connexion with the thought of the age. But here, too, judgment is necessarily made from the standpoint of the individual, with the result that the anti-religious class both together as equally irrational, whereas the religious, convinced of the reality of their religious beliefs, would possibly resent the suggested

relationship between them and others of a supernatural kind. The relationship subsisting between the crude, the childish, and the most spiritual ideas of the supernatural has been emphasized especially by those scarcely sympathetic to religion, and from their detached standpoint the oneness is justified. But the essential differences need an explanation, and for this we have to look to the environment and what it offers to the individual. Now unless there was the outlook or the type of mind ready to accept ideas of the supernatural, we cannot conceive the possibility of any religion. We have to postulate similar psychical tendencies to explain the rise, the persistence, and the variation of similar features. When we realize this, there is the fact that this type will accept either the current religious ideas of the environment or others which are out of harmony with them. In either case they are held genuinely, and, although this is not the place to refer to such matters as secular education, it is at all events obvious that the responsibility of the environment towards the developing consciousness of the young is a very serious one.¹

Significance of the resemblances and differences.

—For those who have at heart the progress of religion, the fact that the normal outlook is primarily towards an acceptance of the supernatural—in its widest sense—is of supreme importance. But the equally plain fact that in course of growth there may be an inability to accept the ideas offered by the environment is an indication of the fluctuating relationship between the developing consciousness and current knowledge. The religious ideas may be rejected, or they may be replaced or supplemented by others which seem to us trivial or crude, or they may subsequently “reassert” themselves and be re-expressed

¹ It is interesting to observe the measures taken in rudimentary societies to teach the young at a difficult part of their lives what is regarded as best for their welfare and for that of their community.

in harmony with the individual's fuller knowledge. A persisting belief in fairies, demons and all their kin is, when viewed externally, a pure "survival," but when we analyse it, it is found to presuppose some recognition of mysteries of good and evil, of happiness and sorrow, of beauty and ugliness, or ideas of more or less immediate influences, and all these from time to time have found a re-expression in complete accordance with the current thought and knowledge. There are obviously some forms of expression of this recognition which no intelligent individual can accept; there are others, however, upon which individuals, equally intelligent, are at variance. And while the underlying psychical tendency persists, the more detached specialistic and scientific enquirers are unremittingly weaving one vast interconnexion of life, energy, and consciousness throughout the Universe. As represented in religion, myth, legend, and fairy-tale, the interconnexion is the outcome of feeling aroused by an observation of the Universe in the light of relatively little knowledge and the thought inherited from the past. But they agree in representing a feeling of the nearness of the Unseen, or rather of a near and wonderful and somewhat terrible realm from which man is not disconnected. Man's psychical tendencies connect him, partly with a world of the senses, the ordinary "everyday" world, and partly with another and more "real" order of existence which he cannot formulate. On the one side, we have only to point to the tendencies of detached scientific research to recognize the oneness of the Universe, and on the other, to that perennial love of the romantic and the exciting things that lie, as it were, on the border-land of ordinary existence, and with which the most ordinary reader of novels feels a kinship. But if we are influenced solely by the external forms of things we are apt to miss their significance and to ignore the underlying feelings which gave rise to them. It is often forgotten that, when

in savage lands or in ancient times the supernatural being or beings of the community aroused dread, awe, courage, or love, these were real and genuine feelings. There is no *a priori* reason why the feelings should not be as real to savages or to ancient men as they are to the most religious mind of the present day, and an impartial and objective study of all the data points to this conclusion. Either the feelings are illusory and cannot be seriously entertained, and this is the anti-supernaturalistic objection—which in the long run is detrimental to all social life—or the external divergences are so great that the underlying identity is resented.¹ And the latter is more especially the objection from that religious standpoint which is influenced solely by conceptions of its own religion.

Ideas of a Devil, Hell, Heaven, etc.—There are other “survivals” closely related to the foregoing which also gain another significance when analysed. For example, beliefs in the Devil and in Hell would be pure “survivals” from certain standpoints. The belief in a far-off Heaven in the skies above our heads would probably also be placed in the same category by many. But though it might be argued that the forms in which these are represented are out of touch with modern thought or knowledge, we miss the point unless we endeavour to understand how the ideas could ever have arisen and persisted. Once we grant that they evidently reflect genuine underlying feelings, the next question is to consider whether the same feelings find other expressions more in accordance with other individual ideas. If one or the other of the above-named features appears to be wanting, and if, on a comparison of religions, it is found to be widely distributed, we may have to recognize

¹ The ultra-rationalistic supposition that the significant data of religion are illusory is anti-social because it implies a principle that could be applied to all conscientious, earnest, and serious endeavour which we do not happen to understand or tolerate.

that though it does not enter explicitly into every consciousness, it nevertheless represents feelings so normal and so real that it may be merely implicit, dormant, or latent.¹ Now, it would be easy to dilate upon the gulf between modern thought as a whole and the Middle Ages, when ideas of the supernatural in general were felt with the keenest vividness. But any estimation of the value of the difference between them and us would be made from standpoints which in all probability would conflict one with the other; and the important point, not to be overlooked, is that only through the decay of the vivid belief in the supernatural has it been possible to conduct enquiries in the field of religion and religious thought. At the present day we often read of the general apathy or indifference to religion; but, it is precisely at the present day that enquiries into religion and into those features which are important for any reconstruction of religion are most persistent. Were intelligent thought as a whole keenly appreciative of supernaturalism—if the phrase be allowed—the need for any reconstruction would hardly be felt, and deep and critical investigation of Christianity and other religions would not, in all probability, be tolerated. But the absence of co-ordination in the different departments of thought which marks this age, and which allows the keenest research in all directions, cannot be regarded as a permanent phase; there is a limit to mental unrest, and herein lies a danger for the future of research.²

Ideas of the soul.—Another “survival” of great interest is the belief that the soul can take the form of birds, insects, or animals. It is insufficient to point to

¹ Cf. above, pp. 181 *sqq.* For example, the Heaven of a future bodiless state sometimes seems to be replaced by the Utopia to be enjoyed by posterity—the evolution of the individual after death being replaced by that of the environment of which he feels himself a part. See below on ideas of immortality and permanence, pp. 340-354.

² See above on equilibrium of thought, pp. 85 *sqq.*

poetry as the origin and cause of the persistence of the idea, we should still have to explain the poet! Poetry only serves to awaken, interpret or to formulate feelings, or to give a fuller or more intelligible expression to what is vaguely and perhaps somewhat subconsciously felt. The belief in question recurs so widely and is frequently so closely bound up with a number of interconnected ideas and customs that in civilized lands it is a "survival" only in the sense that it is no longer part of a coherent system of thought associating the individual with the animal. But we should still need to explain the persistence of the belief in these lands and its origin and prevalence elsewhere. The belief in an external form of the soul reappears quite independently over so many parts of the world that it cannot be due to borrowing. What must be presupposed is a certain readiness to allow that the soul can take an external form; what is more fundamental is the readiness to believe that there is such a thing as a soul. Now if we were to analyse the belief we might proceed thus. Country people in Yorkshire think, or at least used to think, that the night-flying white moths were human souls.¹ Elsewhere the soul is located in butterflies, bees, or birds, and, indeed, what is a sporadic belief in civilized lands is elsewhere so commonly understood that the human soul can even be embodied in serpents or animals. But this belief implies that the soul can manifest itself in a form visible to the senses. This is interesting from the point of view of psychical research, which investigates visions, ghosts, and wraiths. We are not concerned with the question of the *objective* reality of such apparitions, it is enough that they are as real to those who see them as any tangible object is to us—they have a *subjective* reality. What is more important is the fact that while there has been a world-wide belief that the soul

¹ This concrete example is given by Sir G. L. Gomme, *Ethnology in Folklore*, p. 158.

can reappear in animals or birds or insects, and while this has even persisted in civilized lands, the belief that it can present itself in its old human form or in some intangible but non-animal shape has forced itself upon types of mind, not necessarily wanting in intelligence or knowledge. In other words, the argument that ignorance and lack of education may account for a belief in an external form of the soul is quite inadequate, it can only account for the sort of beliefs, and not for the reason for which they are entertained. But obviously we must go down deeper and perceive that both series of evidence imply that the soul can be present or can make itself accessible after death. Clearly this may be felt by many who would see no cause to formulate their belief or conviction in the ways that we have considered: many would doubtless agree that a dear dead relative or friend *seems* to continue to influence us. In the last resort we reach an implicit or explicit belief in *something* that does not die with the body, something that may still be near and may influence us, though unseen or unrealized. Thus, when we survey man we find types of consciousness of which very many feel that there is in man *something* that does not perish, some of which go further and recognize, or are convinced that they can recognize, this *something* in an external form, whether tangible or intangible.

The significance of their presence.—When we treat as irrational or absurd the belief that the soul can appear in animal, bird, or insect, our attitude to the whole belief is usually influenced by our current body of thought. In the light of our own total experience we estimate both this belief and that in visions or ghosts. If we reject the evidence *en bloc* we should be ignoring the fact that underlying it is a belief fundamentally related to the ordinary religious thought of the environment and its ideas of the human soul. Now, in that *all* these beliefs and ideas are concerned with the supernatural, it may

be that *all* would appear equally irrational to those who reject the supernatural. But those who occupy such a position are under an obligation to analyse their own beliefs of the soul. Death means *either* annihilation *or* the persistence of some part of ourselves and the consciousness of this persistence. It is to be observed that the belief in a soul reappears among those who express it in a form with which the contemporary religious thought has no sympathy. In other words, the belief is not evoked by a particular religion, but it can be shaped by it. If the belief comes by intuition it is built up by retrospect and reflexion. To recognize a human soul in insects or in animals may perhaps betray a crude and ignorant mind, but it is a mind which is prepared to recognize the existence and the persistence of the soul, and this is the type of belief which has been elevated in the history of religion. When the fundamental underlying conception appears in higher levels in a form which is out of touch with religious thought, there is need for a continued development until the system of thought is in harmony with instinctive ideas which though essentially valuable, need re-expression. In the nature of the case, it is easier to deal with those who have the ideas, though in a form we cannot appreciate, than with those who feel they have outgrown them ; and it is for the latter to realize that the development of the consciousness readily makes for the disappearance of certain psychical features which can subsequently " reassert " themselves.¹

Survivals and reassertion.—When, in the development of the consciousness of the individual or of the environment, particular beliefs or expressions of feeling are outgrown, we may readily see that there has been an increase in knowledge or intelligence ; but it does not follow that what is dropped cannot reassert itself in another form, and in touch with fuller knowledge. The man

¹ See above, on the principle of reassertion, pp. 129 *sqq.*

who once believed that souls could appear as night-moths might later reject *en bloc* the total body of ideas associated therewith, much in the same way that some have felt that the Bible lost all its value, because it contains actual errors, and features which cannot be considered credible in the light of our knowledge. Our habit of viewing bodies of ideas as closed systems or as structures is the cause of this ; and when we forget that the contents of our consciousness grow and develop, it is often easy to suppose that what we detach from ourselves is necessarily detached permanently, that what answered some need will not be wanted again. Though knowledge leads us to cast off certain beliefs, our knowledge is at present incomplete ; it rests with us to make it less incomplete. The purpose which causes us to detach ourselves from considerations which appear irrelevant, has invariably made for the progress of knowledge, but it is the purpose of the individual at a certain period of his development and only part of a more profound one (p. 127). The continuous variation and change mark the difference between the lower and the higher forms of thought, and indicate the repeated efforts to reinterpret and re-express underlying feelings that insist upon finding an outlet.

Thus, "survivals" are peculiarly instructive when they represent a type of consciousness which cannot find total satisfaction in the current thought. In common with cruder features—resort to magic, witchcraft, astrology and the like—and with particular divergences from or modifications of the current religion, they reflect the presence of minds which have to be reckoned with, whether by those who would reconstruct religion or by those who are more concerned with purely social reforms ; for if their psychical needs are not satisfied they may find an outlet in ways retrogressive and even debasing.¹

¹ Note the modern recrudescence of superstition when the current religion is not satisfying.

The natural and the supernatural outlook.—The general outlook of children, savages, and the vast majority of men accepts certain ideas which may roughly be called “supernatural.” But it is evidently not on account of ignorance or inexperience, since not only are uncivilized people exceedingly “rational” in other respects, where we are pleased to agree with them, but the ideas find a place in the consciousness of civilized religious adults who are “irrational” only in those questions upon which the man who rejects the supernatural considers himself the better judge. Neither growth of the individual nor increase of knowledge necessarily eliminates these ideas, and although, when we survey the history of thought, the ideas have often weakened and apparently disappeared, they have again reappeared and with a newer and fuller significance. Whatever the form they take or the behaviour they induce, the fundamental fact is that they are accepted with sincerity and genuineness—only for this reason have they persisted—and they are regarded as adequate expressions until need for more adequate ones has been felt.¹ We have now to notice that the underlying features of the “supernatural” are analogous to those in ordinary relationships and everyday life. The difference between the “natural” and the “supernatural” is everywhere felt *subjectively*, but the observer will find it difficult to discover any absolute distinction between the two. In the course of research, the general position which enables a man to deal with his subject has been continually developing, and when he has found it imperfect it has been his aim to set it upon a firmer basis, to test and improve his conclusions, to verify and, if necessary, modify his working hypotheses. That his position is, in the eyes of his opponents, an untenable one does

¹ To assume as a principle that they are not *bona fide* is detrimental to all unprejudiced research; cf. pp. 209 note 1, 363 *sqq.*

not induce him to adopt their position, provided he has found that his own, though imperfect, offers the better chance of dealing with the data. Why a man should be so obstinate and insist upon proceeding along a course which may provoke greater opposition is unintelligible until we find ourselves doing the same thing in a similar or perhaps another department of activity, and perceive that we are consciously or unconsciously endeavouring to realize something of our Self. Others and not we the issue of our toils shall see, and our work is merely part of a series of activities connecting the past with the future. Our outlook may be concerned only with the present and the visible, but none the less there is this more profound side of the consciousness, the mainspring of our activities, and the activities themselves are incomprehensible unless we consider their relation to an environment which once did not and soon will not know us. Whatever be our attitude to supernaturalism, all sincere individuals, including the thoroughgoing rationalist and the mystic, are implicitly expressing what is more explicitly formulated in religion.

Implicit ideas of continuity. — If from some rationalistic position we ask why men believe or practise that which we may consider absurd or irrational, we shall end by enquiring why we ourselves should ever trouble to undertake work, the sequel and fruits of which we shall not live to enjoy, or why we should even concern ourselves with investigating superstitious and other beliefs. In the end we should either be as absurd or irrational as those we condemn, or our purposive activities would evidently be part of a larger purpose of which we are ignorant. The most strenuous opponent of supernaturalism works in an environment which once did not, and some day will not know him ; and if he be sincerely desirous of removing the errors of contemporary thought he impels *his* opponents to justify their religious convic-

tions. Just as the wasp is working for a relatively remote future (p. 111), so the critic of supernaturalism is unconsciously working for conditions in which he perhaps doubts whether he can have any interest. Every man who works for the future implicitly admits some continuity. Development comes from a more conscious recognition of what has hitherto been done more unconsciously ; and if we prefer to assert that we " instinctively " strive for the future, we acknowledge the value of a part—and a very profound part—of our consciousness of which we are ignorant. In this way our entire psychical being is wiser than our conscious self, and the essence of all psychical development is the growth of the knowledge of the place of the self in the Universe. Consequently, he who denies Supernaturalism and a continuity after death, speaks only from the present stage of experience and knowledge, and the more sincere his endeavours, assuredly the more does he implicitly manifest an " instinct " of his continuity.

A fundamental psychical similarity.—In dealing with survivals we have noticed a variety of evidence for *bona fide* beliefs representing different ideas of the supernatural, and such is the resemblance among them that we can infer that there is a tendency for the consciousness of men to react towards the Universe in a way that leads to results that are essentially similar despite the conspicuous formal or external differences.¹ The impressions that actuate are not sense-given, but they have been more powerful than these ; and those who are most ready to declare that they rest upon an illusion are referring to a part of the consciousness which has been beneficial to themselves and is enabling them to achieve a purpose which they can hardly realize. These are ultimate

¹ We may say that there is something in the Universe that influences all men in a fundamentally similar manner ; but it is difficult to find a really objective way of stating the results of purely objective comparison.

problems which the study of religions is not called upon to handle at this stage. We have to compare religions, to take our evidence as we find it, and to interpret it on the assumption that we are dealing with men of flesh and blood. From what we know of man, there is little reason to suppose that there is any fundamental difference in the character of the momentum with which the babe of savage and that of civilized parents will start life. In the light of the evolution of men we may infer from the relationship between the similar pre-natal and the diverging post-natal vicissitudes that the psychological and psychical resemblances between all infants will be greater than the differences. Only as the consciousness develops do we see the effect of the environment and other factors (*e.g.* heredity) upon the child. Now, attention has often been directed to the parallelism between the characteristics of childhood and those of rudimentary peoples. No doubt it has often been exaggerated and it is perhaps impossible to state the case decisively. But it would seem that the parallelism rests mainly in attitude, outlook, and spirit: we have freshness and energy where interest is aroused; naïveness and spontaneity; the good qualities are very attractive, the bad ones are repelling. The temperament is uncontrolled by experience; the child is too young to appreciate the environment, and the environment of rudimentary peoples is too young and devoid of experience for swift advance. The possibilities are those afforded by the environment, which in rudimentary and backward areas is relatively more simple and more coherent, as regards thought, than our own more highly complex and civilized areas.

The influence of environments simple or complex.—As we readily see among ourselves, the environment of the town-child and of the peasant-child has differed widely—much more in the past than at the present day—in the range of possibilities it furnishes.

It is in the more simple environments that we find so many remarkable examples of the retentiveness of tradition and of more archaic words, phrases, beliefs, and customs. There is also a certain hostility to the new and unaccustomed which we are wont to contrast with the life in the more complex environments, where the selective process of the individual has a wider range. As we all realize, it is in the latter that the energetic mind finds more scope—for good or for evil—and it is here that, as opposed to the slow-moving rural life, there can be a love of the new and the novel, merely because it is new and novel. The vast amount of data presented to the alert mind in any complex area is, as we know, the reverse of rest-giving ; and while the trained mind can be more deliberately selective, and “ shut off ” its attention, to the undisciplined and eager mind the result may be tiring, jading, and even injurious. It is probable that the best controlled mind can scarcely avoid some strain. Hence, the familiar fact that towns are recruited from the country allows the guess that the individual may really be unable to stand the strain of too large a variety of phenomena, and that this has a deleterious effect, culminating in the extinction of the stock. Be this a good guess or not, the more complex areas are fed from the less complex, the towns from the country, and the ordinary causes alleged (housing, labour conditions and the like) do not explain facts which apply, not merely to civilized lands alone, but even to the relatively quieter lands in the distant East.

Conservatism and novelty.—Conservatism, especially noticeable in the less busy environments, opposition to novelty, more characteristic (formerly at least) of the country, and even a certain resentment to strangers (still, or until recently, shown in out-of-the-way places in Europe), are features that are very regularly observed among rudimentary peoples. The last, in fact, finds many

parallels among savage races, where dislike or fear of strangers is a feeling that is often part of an organic body of thought; that is to say, there are rites, observances, and beliefs connected with the presence of strangers, or with a journey into strange lands.¹ It might be tempting to suppose that the village-children of Europe, who will manifest a curious resentment to the stranger whom they do not know, afford an illustration of another "survival." Unless we suppose that there has been some remarkable inheritance from the time when every stranger might be an enemy, the more natural course is to treat this as another example of an innate feeling, a normal endowment of the consciousness. The child's attitude to the eccentric and the witless is equally one of opposition to something which lies outside the horizon of his little world of understanding. The feeble-minded, the unusual, and even those who are so preposterous as to jabber like a barbarian in some foreign tongue and not in the language of the environment, lie outside the psychical level, and the attitude to them illustrates the normal attitude everywhere to the abnormal.² This attitude to the strange and novel has had several remarkable results, but on the whole it appears to be a natural and instinctive feeling which has been beneficial. It is not confined to children or rudimentary peoples. It is essentially the feeling which leads every adult to hold an attitude of reserve or suspicion to that which lies outside his body of thought, or to refrain from admitting another to his little group until the newcomer has approved himself in accordance with the body of thought that holds the group together. From the world-wide rites of initiation or entrance into tribes, families, clubs, societies, and trade-unions to the attitude of each and every individual

¹ See Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, II. *Taboo* (1911), pp. 101 *sqq.*

² It will be admitted of course that the remarks apply more especially to the past decades than to the present.

to that strange idea which knocks for admission to his body of thought there is a prevailing instinct, relatively conservative, and, we must admit, in many ways beneficial. The conservative tendency seems to be a "survival" if we consider its prevalence among rudimentary peoples ; but it can be called one only when it is expressed in a form out of touch with the environment, and the various examples we have been noticing may allow us to see that it is merely a particular expression of a common instinct.

Conservatism and the average thought.— It is hardly necessary to say that the word "conservative" is used quite apart from any modern political application ; as a matter of fact, if "conservatism" means a persistent clinging to one's own body of thought, it is as likely to characterize the more progressive as the less progressive of political movements. The progressive individual is only progressive in certain particulars, and the most "radical" is not inclined to accept new ideas which run counter to his cherished plans. Since progressive movements in both life and thought are very apt to combine both the disadvantages and the advantages of the specialistic attitude in thought, the true and beneficial "conservative" tendency is that which takes into account the larger interconnexion and the wider environment which the so-called "progressive" tendency ignores or overlooks in its anxiety to move. We are so accustomed to notice the evidence for advance or progress in the world's history that we forget the repeated occasions where there has been—as it seems to us—failure, retrogression, and relapse. We are apt to judge by the high-water marks, and to be blind to the inability of the environment to assimilate all that reformers and others have offered it. In studying "survivals" of any kind we are brought face to face with that slowly-moving, slowly-developing common consciousness, the average thought, as it were, which persists despite the more striking external changes

in political, social, and religious vicissitudes. It is true in a sense that history is the history of the people, and that Nature is democratic and recognizes no privileged class among all her constituents. If Nature seems to pay more heed to the average type of *all* life than to those who are too much below or above it, our analysis of "survivals" may convince us that they represent traits too serious for us to ignore.

"Authority" as an alleged survival.—The last words lead to the observation that "authority" or respect for it, has explicitly or implicitly been looked upon as a survival. We often read of modern tendencies against "authority"; but if we examine examples of the resentment, we shall find that objection is manifested to one kind of authority by those who readily submit to another. The most dangerous of attacks upon any external authority will have been due to the cordial recognition of some other authority controlling the movement; and when writers of the cruder rationalistic type inveigh against authority in the realm of religion, we soon see that they are consistently manifesting their allegiance to and reliance upon another authority in the world of thought. If we object to a certain form of authority, we have a context to which the word concretely belongs; but when we flourish terms abstractly in all their nakedness, we allow every individual to clothe them as he thinks fit—that is, to apply it to the particular form of authority which he resents. In like manner, cries of "Liberty" and "Freedom of Speech" become meaningless, or rather productive of chaos, since while we use them in reference to particular types of cases and within certain limits, the burglar and the slanderer could seize our terms and justify himself when we are the sufferers. It is so with many terms which become divested of a coherent context, float around, and are used in a way for which we may find parallels in the

treatment of words and names by savages and other rudimentary folk. We have only to consider such terms as God, Religion, Science—even "Survival" itself—to observe the confusion that can arise when thought is at a stage of transition and words are divested of any consistent content of meaning. Now, in the nature of the case we cannot progress unless our terms arouse similar ideas, unless they have similar contexts of feeling and thought among the members of an environment. We must all mean much the same by the terms we use, else there would be inconceivable chaos. Consequently, our terms must have had each some generally similar meaning in the past, even though the meaning may since have undergone some change. Such a term as "God" must have involved a similar context of feeling and thought, else it would hardly have persisted in general use. Thus, we come to see that there is something communal—democratic one might almost say—about what is inherited from the past. The environment has set its stamp upon the features; they do not represent some privileged aspect of the whole, or that which is merely departmental or specialistic. The authority of religion has rested in the immediate demand made by the religion of the age upon the individual. When religion loses its authority there is still something in man that is authoritative—whether we refer to his "conscience" or "honour"—but there may be no harmony between the dictates of his inmost being and the current religious beliefs and practices. The conscientious individual resists the authority of Church, Law, or State when his conscience is outraged; but when there is harmony of thought, the thought represented and comprised under these three terms is not likely to run counter to the ordinary individual. Consequently they have an authority, not merely because of what they symbolize, but by reason of the harmony between the

profoundest ideas of the individual and those of his environment as reflected in the three.

Authority and the consciousness.—Respect for authority is everywhere instinctive ; there must be some recognition of superiors and leaders, even if it be only a children's game, and the general environment takes care to see that there are limits to abuse of Authority, Freedom of Speech, and Liberty. By the use of the intellect the individual may even justify things commonly held to be contrary to good morals—it has been and still is done—but the slow-moving level of thought is strongly “ conservative,” and opposed to that which the more alert minds may support or condone. It has its recognition of limits, and though it may not formulate its reasons, it is obvious that its instinctive feeling is for its own preservation. Whether we study rudimentary groups or the humbler levels of society, there is this strong adherence to principles which indubitably make for self-preservation, and which are unconsciously felt rather than consciously expressed. Their “ Authority ” is the common feeling of what ought or ought not to be done, and comparative study shows that it underlies all religious and other thought. The line may be drawn in a way that eludes our comprehension ; but what may or may not be done is clearly recognized by the common consciousness of each group. From this point of view, we may say that each group or environment contains within its consciousness its own authority, dealing, according to current ideas, with the individuals who offend it, and correcting or adjusting the somewhat individualistic conceptions of authority which confront it. Ideas of Authority handed down from a preceding generation are implicitly tested by the average thought, and those that persist are not isolated, but form part of a nexus of feelings and ideas however vague.

Ideas of equality and inequality.—Finally, the

frequent promiscuous and somewhat nonsensical use of the word Equality is quite opposed to the common consciousness of the environment; although, of course, if some relative superiority were never recognized, no one would be able to cause any movement or exercise any influence. Among some very rudimentary groups all men appear to be equal, but we find that the equality involves a much clearer context of ideas than is often the case when the word is employed by the less rudimentary individuals of civilized lands. The men are equal in that they have approved themselves fit and proper men according to the current ideas and have been initiated into the group. None the less, there is a natural recognition of relative superiority when certain activities are concerned—one man is a better hunter, the other excels in hut-building, and so forth. Both the equality and the inequality we see in such groups are really bound up with a large body of ideas of a social-religious nature. For, in the simple community the relative superiority of the hunter or of the potter or of the weaver is departmental, all are necessary for the whole environment; and while we can certainly see a conspicuous inequality in the less simple groups, it is found to depend primarily upon ideas of a religious or supernaturalistic character. In other words, the equality and inequality are not isolated conditions. If there is equality, all share in the burdens and responsibilities, all are necessary constituents of the entire environment. If there is inequality, it is primarily departmental or specialistic, the superiority is in some particular (religion, war, etc.); and although it will be extended to the individual as a whole, primarily it is essentially psychical, and is due to the impression made by personality.

The ideas are of relatively temporary significance.—The modern promiscuous use of the word Equality often implies a feeling of superiority. *A* is not treated

as he feels he has a right to be treated ; he feels that he is superior in certain respects to *B* who, in other respects, claims, or is supposed, to be the superior. But all ideas of status are transient. When we were considering the relative superiority of one position over another, we found that although we might be sure that to-day one was better than another, yet, as thought moves, both frequently proved useful or indispensable. In looking back upon the course of research we concluded that the various competitive positions in the past have given it a greater fulness. At any given time we may feel and be actuated by the conviction that current positions are of unequal value, but all analogy will suggest that they are valuable and necessary for the stages which shall succeed the present. A proportionate estimate cannot be made at the time, and if each individual is true to himself, subsequent events indicate that questions of equality and inequality, of superiority and inferiority, however they may affect us now, are temporal. The more we are impressed by the contribution to the present which was made by a congeries of apparently unequal workers, the more we perceive that *all* the constituents of an environment—of workers in research or in an area—are equally necessary and valuable from a more comprehensive standpoint. This we gain from retrospect.¹ Now, if we could analyse any modern environment we should find a number of individuals each with the feeling that his activities were relatively more essential to the welfare of the environment than sundry others. It is a natural feeling, and is stimulating ; it is illustrated when some think that their occupation, field of study, or position is superior to others that might be mentioned. Consequently, if we took that environment as a whole we should see what *it* considered essential ; the various constituent portions, taken separately, probably would not

¹ Above, pp. 97 sqq.

agree to the list, but the environment which contained, tolerated, and encouraged them, would give us a more comprehensive standpoint than that of an individual or group of individuals. This is the conception we gain when we look objectively at the environment. When it is said that "all men are equal in the sight of God," "equal" has no meaning unless it implies value and worth, and the words replace the fruits of retrospection and our notion of the objectivity of the environment by the intuitive conviction that to an All-knowing and Intelligent Power there is not that superiority and inferiority among men which we, from our small and narrow attitudes, are apt to perceive. The words attribute to the Deity a sympathetic insight which we do not possess, although we know that by sympathy and knowledge questions of inequality and inferiority tend to reshape themselves. They attribute to an All-powerful Spiritual Being what impresses itself upon us when we consider the constituents of an environment and the value of them all for its development.

Isolation, specialism, and survivals.—The more closely men are bound together by large common interests and ideas, the less the feeling of inequality and inferiority ; but if this is an ideal as regards conditions in a complex civilization, in rudimentary groups it is more real. In the latter there is relatively little differentiation, relatively little individuality, the members are joined by the feeling of self-preservation and by a common tradition and world of thought. As among many animals "there's a law of the pack which means self-subordination." All members are necessary and valuable one to the other, and where superiority is recognized it is primarily where ideas of the supernatural are involved. The sentiments of equality and inequality are ultimately bound up with the highest values the group possesses. Everywhere these sentiments throw some light upon the character of

the values that prevail in an environment. "Authority" and "Equality" are words which like the word "Survival" itself depend upon contexts of ideas, and one of the chief aims of this chapter and the preceding has been to press home the correlative of specialism. In specialistic research we detach from our study data that appear to be irrelevant; but since every standpoint in research or in life is only one of a number of standpoints, the more we detach ourselves from that which does not happen to appeal to us, the narrower our standpoint may be. In an age of greater self-consciousness when more minds are alert, and when there are more data to excite them, there may be an excessive differentiation; people will be differing profoundly on every important question, and the variety of outlooks will make for disintegration. The environment viewed as a whole will, on the other hand, have a wider outlook than any of its individuals, and it is here that we have to turn in order to ascertain what are the values it instinctively cherishes. That the values often "survive" in some crude or irrational form is undeniable, but they are there waiting to be re clothed or reasserted in a form that will appeal to the average individual.

Survivals and psychological evolution. — A survey of characteristic "survivals" emphasizes the fact that the movements of thought and the differences in thought have made the gulf severing us from primitive, prehistoric man; but the innumerable variations conceal some fundamental psychological similarities, corresponding to the physiological similarity of all men. The individual cannot be viewed entirely apart from his group or environment, and the latter progresses or decays through the activity of the constituent individuals. There must be some relationship between the individual and his group; it is not enough for a man to differ, or to desire to exercise influence, a certain "psychological relationship"

must be established whereby the individual is comprehended and his value estimated. Before X can be influenced by Y, X must reach a certain stage of development : not every one would be influenced by reading a recondite and abstruse work, and not until we reached a certain age could we appreciate even *Robinson Crusoe*. Psychological development is a subtle process : to some stimuli we react almost instinctively, for others a lengthy training is necessary ; and the investigation of the character of psychological development is really of practical value for all education. In studying religions we deal not only with this development, but with the contents of man's consciousness and their interconnexions.

Theories of psychological evolution.—Next, it is interesting to observe the varying ways in which “survivals” are regarded, and the theories implied therein. Sometimes it is said that we retain in our minds faculties “inherited from our animal ancestry” ; or they are “détritus” from a distant past ; or “by the mere force of inertia an institution goes sliding along the old well-worn groove, though the impetus which first set it in motion may have died out ages ago.” On the other hand, the “survivals” are also supposed to reveal the cruder, coarser stratum underlying our culture ; or, if we scratch away the veneer of civilization, we shall find the savage. And so forth. All explanations involve theories of the physiology and morphology of thought, but precisely what do our picturesque metaphors mean ? Can we express, psychologically, in terms of mental facts and processes, either the “survival” of antiquated ideas, or the mystery of the savagery underlying the lacquer ? At all events, we can recognize a twofold theory. On the one hand, the usual notion of a “survival” seems to imply that the difference between ourselves and savagery is the result of a very lengthy evolution in time, while other metaphors suggest that this difference is in no way

to be reckoned by the centuries separating us from our wild ancestors. In other words, one view looks back over the ages and sees the cultural gap, the other dismisses the weight of years and descries an underlying connexion between the savage and our raw selves. Now, there is an interesting analogy to this in organic evolution, because, on the one hand, every individual can be viewed as the outcome of the lengthy development of life from the remote past when life first dawned upon this planet. On the other hand, the individual can be viewed as the outcome of a relatively brief development which in the pre-natal stage approximately corresponds to that undergone by the race. The embryological development with its rough approximation to the evolution of the race allows us to look upon the individual, not necessarily as one having behind him the long line of human and pre-human ancestors, but as one who in the course of a few months has rapidly summarized, as it were, the lengthy history of organic life. Although, in the present state of knowledge, this must not be taken too literally, the physiological evidence is in any case very suggestive for the psychical nature of man. In so far as men are of one physical human species and undergo a similar pre-natal development, the difference between all infants, of civilized or savage parents, will in certain respects be slight; while only in course of growth will all the differences due to heredity and environment manifest themselves and exert their influence. Now, the fact that we are not more like the savage can be ascribed (*a*) to the centuries of development, (*b*) to our parentage, and (*c*) to the environment which educates us. On the other hand, the history of such lands as Palestine, Babylonia, and others, proves that there is no momentum in past civilization; culture is not a firm structure, nor does it persist by its own inertia. Hence, the fact that we differ from the savage will not be due to the centuries

severing ourselves from savage ancestors (*a* above), but to the other factors (*b* and *c*). Further, whatever be our estimate of factors *b* and *c*, there can be no doubt that the difference in question rests upon individual activity ; for, however great be one's indebtedness to inherited dispositions and parental training, only by our personal energy will the culture we find in our environment be handed on to our descendants. This is an empirical fact, confirmed (1) by the rise of some areas and the decline of others, (2) by the general progress of thought, independent of the fall of ancient civilizations, (3) by the presence of a relatively lower culture after the disappearance of some civilization, and (4) by the incessant need of keeping up the level of thought in accordance with our ideals. The civilization of the white man is not ensured by the lengthy development that preceded it, and the casual treatment of "survivals" quite overlooks the disappearance of civilizations in the past, a proof that beliefs and practices do not persist either of their own accord or because one's ancestors had maintained them for a number of generations.

Survivals and ideals.—Every "survival," as such, has been placed by the side of our body of thought and found wanting (p. 150). Indeed, from a certain point of view supernaturalistic religion has been judged a "survival." On the other hand, since the "survival" is some external phenomenon, the kernel of which is often expressed in forms superficially different, it could be argued that religion might be re-expressed in a form that would appeal to the point of view in question. Man normally tends to beliefs of a supernaturalistic kind ; and if they disappear, they may reassert themselves in another form, while, if they persist, they may take a "superstitious" form out of harmony with the best thought of the environment. While all non-religious attitudes are, as such, narrow and incomplete, any effort to synthesize thought

in an environment must take account of *all* the types of minds that constitute it, for the harmony of anything that may be regarded as a unit cannot come by the excision or suppression of any one part, but by further continued development. As it is, the "survival" is often a phenomenon that clashes with our ideals; it is opposed to our conceptions of the ascent of thought. The study of "survivals" brings home the fact that we implicitly regard thought as developing along our lines—there is an instinctive confusion of individual development with that of the whole to which the individual belongs. The survival is thus outside our body of thought; it has no place in our line of development. If man has evolved beyond the monkey-stage, and is convinced that monkeys will never evolve into men or super-men; he is, on the other hand, ignorant of the future of thought, and he cannot conceive himself reaching a stage where the "survival" in its present or in some other shape could find a place. On the other hand, his body of thought has admittedly developed in the past, and with total results which could never have been anticipated. To be logical, therefore, every apparent "survival" must be regarded as *outside* and *not behind* the line of advance or the current body of thought. The individuals who are our evidence for survivals thus recall other examples of individualistic peculiarities, including even the men of unrecognized genius. Unless we can tell the exact trend of thought we can scarcely estimate the value of novel and strange phenomena. Such is the development of thought that the unorthodoxy of yesterday may be the orthodoxy of to-day—but, unfortunately for our rules-of-thumb, it sometimes continues to be unorthodox! When the (logically) non-normal becomes normal, there is no guarantee that the next example will not be abnormal. We estimate from to-day, but the non-normal of all kinds awaken us to the presence of minds which insist upon

finding some external expression, minds which may be contributing to the thought of to-morrow.

The contribution of the individual.—The non-normal in religion and elsewhere happens to lie outside our ordinary life and thought ; it may or may not become the normal. But the great gulf between prehistoric man and ourselves is clearly due to innumerable transitions from the non-normal to the normal, from the new to the accustomed, from the strange to the familiar. Enough has been said to show that the brunt of the change lies on individuals rather than on the environment regarded vaguely as a collective whole. We can speak of the environment as a collective whole for convenience, but in all activities, even when men move as one, we have to do with individuals. We cannot regard the environment, or the group, or the social body as “self-moving,” “self-raising,” or the like. It is influenced by individuals, by parts of the greater whole. And if we turn to individuals, the analogous question arises, Do they develop by some self-active principle? But we have seen that the individual is a part of some larger psychical whole. He has his purposes and aims, but they prove to be subordinated to a larger process. There are effective processes of which he is quite unconscious. The unit or whole, here, is not the visible group, it can only be expressed in terms of thought. And indeed the normal individual implicitly realizes this when he acts for the future and links himself with the past as though he were a member of a whole more extensive and permanent than himself. Hence, we find him explicitly regarding this whole in a way that involves the profoundest thoughts of which he is capable. In fact, so far from recognizing any mechanical process of development, those individuals who have been most conspicuous in influencing thought have not rarely acknowledged that their activities were in some way connected with a Power not of themselves ;

and that their development was bound up with their relationship with a superior and superhuman Power.

Religion formally and explicitly recognizes a certain continuity and interconnexion associating the individual with a supreme Personal Deity of the Universe. Religious individuals acknowledge this in varying degree and form of expression ; and men of "religious genius" have appealed successfully because the average individual could feel the truth of that which they have uttered. But religion is not a thing apart, and the fundamental principles of continuity and interconnexion are implicitly recognized quite apart from their religious expression ; that is to say, they have certain psychical aspects independent of religion. Progress, however, does not depend on the mere presence of these fundamental principles, but upon the co-ordination of all aspects of life and thought—not upon features advanced and elevated in themselves (p. 186 *seq.*), but upon the particular way in which they harmonize with the entire life and thought of their environment. The development does not concern parts but wholes. From the analysis of an environment with its "religion," "superstition," and "survivals," we pass next to some consideration of the changes in the course of its history.

CHAPTER VII

THE ENVIRONMENT AND CHANGE

I. HISTORY

(a) Some Factors in the Process of Change

Active preparation and passive imitation.—A discussion of "Survivals," whether true or alleged ones, cannot be severed from that of the introduction into an environment of important changes. Such changes can readily be illustrated from the pages of history; we see the process at work at the present day, and in the nature of the case the changes account for the enormous difference between modern thought and civilization, and the conditions in which primitive man must have lived. Speaking generally, we may say that the appearance of any significant change presupposes some feeling that a change was necessary, while if it persists, it is because the novelty has been assimilated and adjusted. Those who feel the necessity for a change stand in certain respects apart from the environment which is ultimately influenced by the change—it is felt in the first instance only by the few; and, although it is unsafe to indulge in generalization, we have to recognize that coercion or force, argument or persuasion, and love of novelty, are not the most important factors in the process. For example, a land may be forcibly taken by the sword, but the conquerors

are often psychically vanquished. The fundamental feature in change is not that something is *imposed*, but, that it is *accepted*, with or without modification. In the first place, we may often see that there is, on the part of the environment, a growing readiness for a change which is associated with one or a few individuals (Darwinism, for example). The age has been slowly preparing for the change. Men have not anticipated or consciously awaited some particular change, *i.e.* in the form it actually took, but there has been a development of conditions towards a new stage which some individual or individuals have crystallized. In research as in history, secular or sacred, the age and the man or men have "found each other"; but the preparation on the part of the environment has been for a sequel of which it was ignorant. Thus, in the first place, while we may associate the change with one or two names, they alone are not wholly responsible for it. They are in a sense the instruments of the age. In the second place, a very considerable amount of change is effected by imitation, a process which has been productive of much good and much evil.¹ Imitation provides an easy means of attaining certain ends, and it saves the trouble of thought and experiment. But while it economises time, labour, and reflexion, it inhibits freedom of thought and the discovery or acquisition of better methods. The process is to a considerable degree one of which we are unconscious. This is illustrated by yawning or coughing in public, by the ease with which we copy dialectical and other peculiarities, or by the imitation of the dress or gestures of any one who has made an impression upon our mind. But the process is more fundamental when the impression leads to an imitation of qualities or activities, good or bad. The point we have to notice is that the process concerns the more sub-

¹ For many useful examples of imitation, see E. A. Ross, *Social Psychology: An Outline and Source Book* (1908), chap. vi. *sqq.*

conscious part of man, and it is especially noticeable when regard, respect, and enthusiasm have been engendered. It is an unconscious process, with many trivial aspects, but none the less it is very powerful, and it takes us to the third important factor in change.

Personality and spontaneity.—As we see to-day, when there are movements making for change, not only are there argument and appeal to reason, but the more subtle problem of *personality* enters into the question. A rousing speech or a stirring address is not necessarily successful because it is logical and in accordance with tested facts ; it is rather that we are aroused or stirred in our depths by those who are revealing some profounder side of themselves. The profounder or the subconscious side of speaker and listener are in play ; and everywhere where there have been men who appeared to be manifesting some more profound part of themselves, and who seemed to have an authority not that of ordinary beings, the result has been effective. The eloquent and impassioned speaker has always been impressive, and especially when he has been dealing with that wherein the greater values of the environment were concerned, or when supernatural beliefs were involved, and he has manifested an intimacy of knowledge which his hearers could sufficiently appreciate. Now, any spontaneity of this kind is particularly instructive if we consider the difference between carefully formulated thought or speech and the occasions when “speaking goes on” in us, as it were.¹ We all do much valuable work without any explicit formulation of our steps, and we can perceive that there has been a considerable amount of training and preparation. We may add up figures, translate from or into a foreign language, or ride a bicycle, without any of the conscious and careful processes that once were necessary ;

¹ We may recall what Charles Lamb said of a speaker at a Quakers' meeting : “ He seemed not to speak, but to be spoken from.”

but often for certain activities no conscious preparation seems to have been needed. When we give a child words so that he may express his ideas, either the vocabulary "creates" the ideas—out of nothing—or his consciousness was such that it only needed a form of expressing some of its contents. Can we imagine what his ideas were before he had the appropriate words? Yet there must have been some preliminary rudimentary stage. Developments of this kind are in harmony with the whole of nature—they are like the breaking of a bud into blossom: the blossom presupposes the bud, but the bud is not a blossom. We all have ideas which we feel, ideas which struggle to express themselves, and wait for some one to help us to formulate them. If this be so, we must assuredly extend the process to the development of the child.¹ The eloquent or impassioned speech delivered without hesitation and reflexion obviously presupposes some previous experience and knowledge, and when it is spontaneous, it is in a sense the production

¹ When any phenomena can be viewed as a series of stages of development, we often find that although each stage has its predecessor, a phenomenon may appear in a form so different or so rudimentary that we do not recognize it. In the organic world, the relationship between the caterpillar and the butterfly proves that though successive stages may be interconnected, those further apart may seem absolutely unrelated. In the evolution of the horse, as a species, we go back until we reach an animal that can hardly be called a horse; even as in the evolution of man we distinguish man from the anthropoid ape. So, too, although the individual develops normally, we distinguish the stages of the baby, child, youth, adult, and old man; but there is a vast difference between babies and adults. Where there is an orderly development there may be striking differences simply because some underlying points of connexion are missed; and since each stage will have its predecessor, the characteristic phenomena of one stage will have necessary antecedents, even though we cannot discern them. Hence, in the psychical development of the individual, it is natural to suppose, on logical grounds, that before the child has a vocabulary he has a rudimentary sort of "thought," even though it be so rudimentary that we hesitate to call it "thought." In like manner, the "intellectual" stage will be logically preceded by a pre-intellectual and not by a non-intellectual stage. See p. 77 note.

in a particular form of what had previously been consciously and unconsciously assimilated.

Spontaneity and prescience.—The orator who will speak on some subject has a goal ; he has landmarks on the way, but his path will often make itself as he proceeds. A writer sees in outline some plot, but as his work develops under his hands, he clothes the “ skeleton ” and even modifies the “ bones.” In all kinds of development there is a dim anticipation of an outcome : sometimes it shapes itself step by step, or retrospect shows that it is not precisely the outcome as it appeared at an earlier stage. This more or less indefinite prescience conforms with the fact that as events come we know what we want. Again, there had been preliminary stages in the coming of the theory of evolution, and the theory gradually commends itself to the minds of intelligent men, but whither it will lead us who can tell ? As it is, it is working itself out, under the influence of diverse tendencies and for apparently diverse ends ; yet each worker will agree that it leads to some desirable end, even though he disagrees with the way in which it is used by his opponent. In personality, in spontaneity, and in the “ pioneering ” character of development we have features which unmistakably emphasize the importance in all change and movement of factors that may be styled non-rational, and of processes of which we are unconscious (cf. p. 76).

The influence of personality.—Although unusual exhibitions of personality and spontaneity are impressive, they have no *a priori* excellence ; calm reflexion may adjudge the results of spontaneity and intuition to be good or bad. The value of the less conscious or subconscious side of man has often been sadly over-estimated in modern discussion, whether in its bearing upon religion or upon other aspects of thought. None the less, while discussion has accumulated much valuable evidence, it gives point to our remarks by illustrating the fact that

there are certain phenomena which very powerfully affect those who have experienced or witnessed them. As far as can be seen this is true of all time. Where we have any of the less normal exhibitions of personality, opinion has varied as much in the past as it does to-day. The same moving and stirring speech, awakening enthusiasm, can be and has been regarded as an appeal to the higher or deeper or inmost selves of men, or as an appeal to the lower and baser passions. The enthusiast and non-normal individual has been variously regarded as exceedingly beneficial or as equally harmful—as inspired or as mad, as a saint or a blasphemer. In any modern example of hero-worship, or in the enthusiasm evoked in *others* by any one whom *we* happen to consider to be wrong, misleading, or even dangerous, we see how very potent is personality and how very important the part it has played in the history and in the development of all thought. The man who thoroughly believes in himself and is in touch with the thought of the environment always commands a certain measure of respect, and when we have to deal with individuals who claimed or were attributed a supernatural authority we can understand how difficult it often was for the environment to judge aright. But such men, whatever their influence, are the trustees of their gifts, and the exhibition or the experience that seems to furnish the greatest values does not—if we are to take the evidence objectively—give us finality. The highest truth which an individual can conceive may be highest from his point of view and from that of his followers, but he has opponents, as sincere as himself. Moreover, the movement of thought indicates that no position can be called complete. It may be sufficient for its age; but ages change, and the simple fact that the adherents of any one religion have not refrained from opposing, persecuting, or killing those who claimed or felt an authority as high as their own, warns us that we

misunderstand the past if we forget that we deal, not with merely intellectual ideas, but with realities, the greatest that men could feel, which actuated their life and their behaviour, and through which we of to-day have reached our present position and have been able to formulate our realities.

Retrospect.—The part that is played by conscious, intelligent endeavour in bringing about religious, social, or political change is not so conspicuous as is usually supposed. There is a difference between our plans and purposes and what actually occurs. There may be a general fulfilment—we may see points of contact between what was anticipated and what followed,—but the deliberately purposive endeavour is not followed by the precise results foreseen.¹ Next, the most rational individual is not completely self-conscious, he is unaware of all the beneficent processes which are essential to his activities. Spontaneous, intuitive, and all non-reflective activities are helpful in so far as they have been disciplined. When we blame intuition, instinct, and spontaneity we have in mind the bad examples which we tacitly ignore when we praise the trio. But careful deliberate judgment is not necessarily sound or final; what is especially important is the tribute we pay to it. And rightly, for the absolute value of the trio is proportionate to the amount of discipline, preparation, and reflexion. This is evident if we consider typical cases. Spontaneity, intuition and the like are correlative with preparation, reflexion and the like. There is a sort of spiral ascent: spontaneity—reflexion—spontaneity—re-

¹ See above, p. 120. It is tempting to connect the anticipation of a cosmic catastrophe in the first century A.D. with the disasters that overwhelmed the Jews. Grave psychical disturbance and unrest lead to anticipations that will be variously formulated. At the present day there are those who anticipate sweeping changes, but no sequel could conceivably justify all the actual anticipations or forebodings.

flexion—and so forth. This is not realized at the time, yet the *flair* of the child—unless it be some unfortunate prodigy—is vastly inferior to that of the adult. It may perhaps be asserted that the antinomies can be reconciled on any given occasion by refusing to accept either ! If the intuitive and the deliberative opinions are in conflict it may be that neither is right or wrong, but that both are imperfect. This would seem to do justice to rival claims, to answer typical cases, and to correct both unrestrained reliance upon unreflective judgment and an intellectualism that scatters dust upon the soul. Retrospect shows us the significance of processes of which we are not consciously aware, which, however, can be enhanced. In being conscious of their value, we ourselves develop thereby ; the discovery of some of the processes in the Universe makes for advance in all psychical growth. From retrospect upon certain factors in change and movement, we turn now to retrospect upon history itself, noticing, as we proceed, the significance of the more unreflective and the more specialized methods of viewing the past.

(b) *The Significance and Treatment of History*

History and the unhistorical.—The past has or has not a value for us. We have an instinct that past history has meaning for us, but everything depends upon ourselves and upon the spirit in which we descend into the past.¹ In historical research, the natural aim of the trained student is to assure himself that he has authentic and genuine accounts of what has happened or has been said. What appears incredible, improbable or impossible

¹ A keen sense of standing at the beginning of a new era will not of course allow any very sympathetic regard for the past. See on this below, pp. 317, 326 *sqq.*, 340.

or unduly biased, will have less, little, or no value for historical purposes, and a very great deal of attention is devoted—and rightly—to the more “rationalistic” endeavour to satisfy our feeling of what is in accordance with reason. But we should not proceed very far before we discovered how much uncertainty and obscurity enshroud a great deal of what has been transmitted; and it is precisely here—where our rational feelings are offended—that it is useful to consider the question of attitude, and to compare the more intuitive and the more deliberate judgments. In studying ancient Oriental history, for example, we have a certain amount of material which on the face of it is open to the gravest doubt. It is no longer regarded as perfectly credible, and there has been a tendency to reject it *en bloc* on account of the internal features. On the other hand, as knowledge has grown and archaeological evidence has come to light, it has sometimes been found that this tendency was an extreme one. The material in question was not to be rejected in its entirety, and forthwith the old tendency to accept the whole *en bloc* has sometimes reappeared. We may sometimes read that scholars “went too far,” have been forced to “return,” and so forth; but it should be noticed that we never recover the old views again in their earlier form. Incidents were told of the birth of the great Sargon I. of Babylonia which are parallel to those related of mythical characters, and since little was known of him, it was inferred that the figure was purely mythical. But as evidence accumulated, it became obvious that Sargon I. was indisputably an historical person, and consequently it was necessary to sever more carefully the reliable data from the unreliable. Error has often been made by accepting and rejecting, *en bloc*, material which really has to be analysed in order that we may distinguish to the best of our ability what is of historical value from what is historically

doubtful or valueless.¹ The root of this error lies in our common habit of seeing things as a whole ; the ordinary mind with its body of ideas touching this figure or that event is more ready to treat it as a whole than to exercise a necessary discrimination between the probable and the improbable elements. It has happened even recently in Oriental research that archaeological discovery has confirmed certain elements of groups of material which had once been considered suspect, and forthwith there have been those who have argued that consequently the whole is authentic. This is to assume that the reasons for which the material was suspected have entirely disappeared, and when this is not so, this new attitude is clearly a deterioration : to adopt an attitude which ignores the reasons which have led others to reject it is a step that does not simplify problems.²

Critical and mediating views.—To take another point. Some may believe that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, and that the account of the Exodus of the Israelites is thoroughly historical ; whereas those, on the other hand, who hold the critical position, will have views which are distinctly destructive, and opposed to the trustworthiness of the sources. Now, the former view is simple and intelligible to all who know the Old Testament, whereas the latter raises a great variety of complex questions which cannot be easily answered—if Moses did not write the Pentateuch, who did ? and when ? and how can we account for the ordinary tradition ? And if the account of the Exodus is not trustworthy, what actually happened ? and how are we to obtain some intelligible

¹ It is characteristic of the "morphology" of thought that the elimination of error from any narrative does not necessarily leave the truth. Analysis of thought is a much more complicated procedure. Cf. below, p. 312 note.

² As a general rule, the adoption of any earlier procedure or view without paying attention to subsequent development is detrimental ; hence the importance of knowing the history of one's subject.

account of the Old Testament in the light of your destructive conclusions? Consequently, as opposed to the strictly thorough-going conservative position, we find, through the influence of criticism, two tendencies. The one is purely critical and thoroughly detached, it seeks to simplify the difficulties and to gain some new view of Old Testament history, it takes the whole field in its purview; the other is "mediating"—the Pentateuch is essentially of Mosaic origin, but later post-Mosaic touches or additions are not excluded, the account of the Exodus is essentially trustworthy, but the record has been idealized and coloured. Now, it will be noticed that the latter is a compromise, but it is as antagonistic to the critical view as the conservative position, and it is useless for those who want explicit answers to questions of detail. It has a transient value, in awakening conservative minds to the progress of criticism; but it makes very important concessions, which really take away the ground from under its feet, by admitting features upon which the critical theory itself is based. Although the tendency may be provisionally acceptable to certain minds, it is not directly helpful to the progress of thought, and it exists as a significant indication of the manner in which a certain type of mind will deal with material and repudiate that unfortunately destructive tendency which, however, has actually made for progress. It exemplifies the disinclination or inability of the average mind to wrench itself away and occupy that detached position of the relatively few who stimulate movements in thought; and this relationship between the many who accept an intellectual compromise and the few who are specialistically progressive finds an analogy in all progressive movements which make for change in the environment. The compromise is impossible from the point of view of the extremely progressive or the extremely conservative, but it has a value for the average mind.

The demand of synthesis.—The average man desires clear-cut and easily-understood results, and, in the nature of the case, these often cannot be given. On the other hand, the general level of thought may move until the specialistic results can be put in a way that is more readily apprehended. If ideas of evolution, for example, are now more or less readily accepted, it is because there has been a development in the relationship between the ideas and the ordinary mind. Whether things are "simple" or "complex" depends upon the way in which we "see" them, that is, upon the relationship between them and our body of thought. Every one desires results that are easily intelligible. Those who engage in specialistic study are no exception, and *their* results seem complex only on account of the difference between the more specialistic and the less specialistic minds. Now, often when there are difficult problems there are only two courses: the first is to continue detached specialistic enquiry and refrain from premature synthesis, and the second is to be content with the results that happen to satisfy us. In the latter case, we are demanding some synthesis, and, more or less unconsciously, we are impelled to dismiss all evidence that thwarts our innate desire for a clear and synthetical conception of the problem. This desire for a "whole" view is irresistible, and it frequently leads us to undertake particular tasks which, as increase of experience will show, could not be accomplished by our methods. For example, when historical evidence is especially weak, we must not expect to recover from it the actual historical facts; but both in historical and other studies, a great deal of time is devoted to the investigation of problems for the solution of which, as we are warned, our data are inadequate or insufficient. So in the world of life, elaborate efforts or "experiments" are made in order to solve problems of educational, social, or economical importance, but there is no unanimity that

the best solution has been found or that even the best methods are being employed.

General advances and particular results.—We find in the world of thought (*a*) the instinctive desire for simple answers to our questions, (*b*) a general disinclination to be content with complicated solutions, and (*c*) the tendency of the simple answer to have a more general appeal.¹ Now, so long as there is any endeavour on the part of reflective individuals to obtain results which they can more or less clearly perceive—even though other individuals do not accept them—useful additions are made to the general stock of experience. There are some ultimate questions which have been asked through all time, the answers may not have been found satisfactory for long, and new answers are still sought. But if we, from any point of view, believe that the questions cannot be answered, the fact remains that the efforts in the past, whatever we may think of them, have given us the knowledge which we possess. If we repress intelligent curiosity, we do that which—if it had been done in the past—would have hindered all advance. Now, if attention is fixed solely upon those results to which we are opposed, our standpoint is incomplete; the fact that the problems still call for solution may blind us to past advances made in the attempt. This actually happens when, for example, some have seen in the intricate problems of Old Testament research of to-day a chaos which blinds them to the solid progress that has been made. But this attitude is not found in Biblical study alone. Any pessimism of to-day ought to be corrected by a recollection of the steps trodden in the past; but unfortunately pessimism sees only the problems of the age, and not the way in which man has hitherto attacked the problems of

¹ Note, *e.g.*, in the political world, the apparent simplicity of taxing capitalists and landowners; also the tendency to put complex proposals and schemes into the simplest formulae, hence the attractive simplicity of "the dear loaf," and so on.

his environment. At all events, one result of the general advance is seen in the fact that there is at the present day a certain readiness to receive certain views which once would have been most strenuously opposed. Some battles have been won, and consequently the critic of the Old Testament, the scientist, the socialist, and others do not have to break fresh ground in *every* direction. Indeed such is the change in certain sections of the environment that new ideas and new formulæ have been simplified so that they are flourished wildly and unintelligently apart from their context of qualifications and conditions. In Biblical criticism, too, many are quite prepared to allow that evidence into which the supernatural enters, and where there are gods, spirits, angels, or demons, is quite unworthy of credence. Some, estimating the whole from one of the parts, are ready to reject the Old Testament *en bloc*, and rule out all material into which the supernatural enters. In the development of thought changes thus ensue which certainly facilitate the work of criticism and prepare the soil for further development, but it is necessary to arrest and correct any inclination to go along lines contrary to rational principles of development.

Historical and other values.—The fact that some body of evidence contains elements patently impossible or improbable from any point of view does not justify us in rejecting the whole. When we reject historical evidence *en bloc* because of one or two incredible elements we often go beyond proper limits; and when we once more accept it in its entirety because elements are justified, if the reasons that made it suspect still remain, we again go to extremes. Now, in going to extremes thought seems to be forced consciously or unconsciously to make some adjustment, some new departure. If such and such a narrative has no value for our specialistic purpose, has it lost all value? If it has lived and has been appreciated

in the past, was it merely because of a belief in its accuracy and authenticity? If a thing survived, is it enough to remark the particular defects *we* see in it, or had it values which we ignore or deliberately reject? We do well to investigate history from a truly rational standpoint; but consider Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. They have had an extraordinary popularity; and while the former has been ranked next to the Bible, the latter was found to be the more readily intelligible among natives of modern Palestine as a book of religious education. But neither has any historical value. Moreover, we all admit that the worth of the historical plays of Shakespeare is not interwoven with questions of historical accuracy; any pleasure we get from them is essentially independent of their historical background. In fact, if they were historically accurate they would be of antiquarian interest, true to ancient conditions which, however, had changed; the universal value for human nature might have been lost in particularities of persons and events. It is to be feared that many of the most moving stories that influence children are not so unimpeachably trustworthy as some of us might wish. In everyday life we appreciate and relate stories of well-known contemporaries regardless of their strict authenticity; the story, if untrue, is a *bene trovato*—it is too good to lose. Indeed, if any one will take the trouble to study the vicissitudes of stories and anecdotes, he will find features which, in illustrating normal tendencies of the human mind, supplement the more serious enquiry with which these paragraphs are concerned.

History and human nature.—The most painstaking, discriminate, and critical of history-books would hardly enthral us, while the Biblical histories which appeal by their eloquent and inspiring descriptions are apt to be sadly imperfect from a critical point of view. When the ordinary Sunday School teacher gives his class an account

of some Biblical figure, and clothes and dresses it in a way that certainly appeals, he commonly puts more into it than is strictly in accordance with the best modern knowledge of ancient Palestinian life. He reproduces the story as he feels it from his own experience of life.¹ But this is just what your strictly cautious historian dare not do. What appeals to the whole man are not the dry bones of history, but something of flesh and blood, living stories and experiences sufficiently within the experience of the hearer. The stories of Jacob and Esau, or of Daniel, for example, thus become stories of men whom all can understand, not of Orientals of past millennia whom only the select few can really appreciate. Thus, while we pay every regard to accuracy, there are cases where we are indifferent, because the value lies, not in conformity to actual historical fact, but in conformity to some part of our whole life. The great things of old which are felt to be true to-day, the things which we can appreciate in an ancient or in a savage environment—these are they which, as the phrase goes, appeal to the heart. To put it otherwise, we may say that in the consciousness of man there is that which is essentially the same underlying the manifold forms of expression and bodies of thought. This unity underlying disparity is vital for the study of religious development. Further, we may notice that what appeals most and arouses the greatest appreciation is concrete and not abstract ; it is part of time and space, but is virtually independent of it ; it has a local habitation and a name, but the apparently historical context is the shell and not the kernel. Mr. Chesterton well insists that things practically lose their point when they are merely local, when they are confined to one particular example,

¹ " But, the critical person will object, did these things really happen ? Well, something happened, and I've just as much right to guess these things happened as he to say they didn't ; especially when I know the conditions." I cull these words from an article in a religious monthly on " Imaginative Preaching." They need no comment.

and not to the class to which the example belongs: "The whole moral meaning would vanish if we suppose that *Oliver Twist* had got by accident into an exceptionally bad workhouse."¹

Concrete examples of abstract truth.—Now, when we say, "None but the brave deserve the fair," or, "Honesty is the best policy," our human nature has found in concrete examples some truth that admitted of being expressed in a convenient formula. The power of seeing the universal in the particular is that which enables men to draw valuable generalizing conclusions from their data. Certain forms of dishonesty are at once recognized and resented by man and beast, but an advance is made when the superiority of honesty can be distinctly recognized and formulated in simple terms. Development is often marked by the recognition and formulation of what had hitherto been barely or vaguely felt.² On the other hand, when the formula has been divorced from experience and has a more abstract, theoretical, or ideal context, it tends to become remote from practical life. To the average mind truth appeals in a form that is concrete, or that can be "grasped" or "visualized." The more abstract and conceptual expression marks an advance of thought, but it runs the risk of passing beyond the ordinary horizon of the average mind. The real value of the stories that appeal lies in the fact that we profit from them somewhat unconsciously—they do not preach *at* us; in appreciating the story we appreciate the kernel. We can profit from more abstract teaching if our experience and thought enable us to grasp it, but there is a very general tendency to bring it into some historical concreteness.

¹ In *All Things Considered*, p. 248.

² Conversely, explicit ideas will often represent later stages in the history of feelings and thoughts which had manifested themselves in vague, undifferentiated or rudimentary forms. Cf. below on the "second birth," p. 351; and see above, p. 238.

History and religious experience.—Consider for a moment the Psalms of David, say, the familiar one beginning “The Lord is my Shepherd” (Ps. xxiii.). All would agree that its real value is its expression of human experience—here, too, is its psychological value; yet when criticism rejects the Davidic authorship, and on the best of grounds, there are those who feel a loss—a sort of *personal* loss. Accustomed to read this and other Psalms in the light of David’s history, they have a body of thought which is seriously touched by this criticism. But in all probability very few would have that acquaintance with David’s life that would really justify their procedure. Few will have taken the trouble to see that the evidence for David’s life has conflicting data pointing to markedly different conceptions of him; and few will be sufficiently acquainted with the religious, social, and political conditions of the eleventh century B.C. to test their views. But it is felt that the value of this and other Psalms lies in the fact that we have the religious experiences of David, who lived about 1000 B.C., of whose life we think we know something. Yet, it is obvious that the Psalm would have the same intrinsic value if the experiences were not 2900, but, say, 2400 years old. As a matter of fact when we look more closely at the trend of Biblical criticism, we find that the religious value formerly attached to the Psalms and to the book of Isaiah, which are traditionally placed at a date from 2600 to 2900 years ago, is replaced—through “destructive” criticism—by the conclusion that both these sources represent the religious experiences of a number of individuals, most of whom lived only a few centuries later. This is the roughest of statements, but sufficiently approximate. From the historical point of view, it is quite true that our conceptions of Old Testament history and religion are being fundamentally changed, but from the point of view of religious experience, a few centuries one way or another are immaterial. Surely,

“Honesty is the best policy”—whoever said it! For the *comparative* method of research, it is enough to have evidence which throws light upon thought, and the *comparative* study of man does not hesitate to range all over the earth in space and time for the evidence it classifies. Such intellectual research compares and classifies data for sociological and religious enquiry irrespective of locality and age, and thereby it has reached valuable results. Hence, just as this method collects the evidence that appeals to it and serves its purpose, and primarily ignores questions of geography and history, so, for religious study, all material that testifies to religious experience has a value independent of historical problems. Proceeding on these lines, then, we may distinguish between the enquiry into all historical questions of genuineness, trustworthiness, etc., and the more humanistic and psychological enquiry that treats narratives and all psychical data as evidence for feelings, thoughts, ideas, aims, and so forth.

The effectiveness of data.—Now just as “survivals” attract attention because they are out of harmony with their environment, so, too, in historical research the data that are incongruous demand notice. The recognition and investigation of such data make up the main problems of history, in that we are struck by the more exceptional, anomalous, and suddenly-appearing phenomena, and endeavour to explain them. Consider some disputed datum—a narrative, incident, or statement which is found in some ancient historical source, or is associated—perhaps orally—with some historical event or person. Why is it disputed? The reason, the only logical reason, will be that it does not conform with other evidence with which it is or could be associated; it does not agree with its proper context, it conflicts with evidence which we consider to be sounder. It has been said that, as a general principle, that which is effective is

historical ; that is genuine which fits into the antecedents and the consequences. On these lines we ourselves usually proceed when we estimate things that are said of people or when we conclude that our waking hours are more real than our dreams. In all doubtful cases we have to take a wider survey of the field involved ; for example, if for a time our dreams night after night were perfectly consistent, we should have to take a larger range of evidence in order to see that, in the long run, our waking life was the more effective. It happens that in Old Testament study, a considerable amount of evidence supports the " traditional " view of the history ; there is a certain self-consistency which invariably impresses the ordinary reader. But there is other evidence that conflicts with it, and criticism rests on the fact that the " critical " view embraces a far wider field of data than its rival, which is impressed by the stock of data that support the conservative or traditional view. Similarly, of the anti-religious and religious attitudes towards the Universe, the former fits into a great mass of data, but it excludes other masses of data, and the total mass is such that the latter offers the better guide. After all, a lie may be temporarily effective, but in the long run avoidance of lying wins the day ; the test of effectiveness is the area it covers ; to cut the knot is an effective way of removing a difficulty, but it does not go far. Lying, deceit, and hypocrisy are sooner or later found wanting, as the field in which they insinuate themselves widens out, and it is impossible to maintain their effectiveness.

All data have some value. — Data cannot be logically disputed save by reference to superior rebutting evidence. We might imagine some future writer with very little evidence for English history urging that the Spanish Armada was a legend because subsequent events did not manifest the consequences he anticipated. It is easy to imagine another suggesting that the Armada was

successful, but that the historians of the age had carefully concealed the fact. That is to say, the writers would be as we are when we deal with the past—at the mercy of such evidence as happens to be available. But the imaginary examples make us realize that an event cannot be logically denied unless there is direct or indirect evidence of a particular character ; and when the datum becomes exceptionally doubtful, though one may not deny it, yet it would be wrong method to build upon it.¹ On the other hand, the now isolated datum begins to have another value. Our hypothetical writer finds no evidence for the Invincible Armada, but he rightly perceives that the datum points to certain conditions, to a certain atmosphere as it were. Herein lies the value of many really unhistorical data. When mediaeval stories send their heroes to the Crusades, though these worthies may never have gone outside their native land, the stories testify to the truth of some Crusades, to their popularity, and to the fact that the hero went to the Crusades then as, later on, he went to a public school and the 'Varsity. The point to be urged is this—the legitimate rejection of a datum for some purpose does not deprive it of value for other purposes. What was thought of persons and events is often more important than the actual bare

¹ For example, one could not *deny* that there was a Noah, but there is much evidence against the trustworthiness of the stories of Noah in the book of Genesis. The fact that denial is illogical does not give the stories of Noah, or any others that may be open to grave doubt (*e.g.* Abraham and Ezra), any increase of value, and they must not be placed in the category of the historical. This applies also to miracles. With our knowledge we cannot logically deny that certain reported miracles occurred, but such is the evidence against the miraculous that it is thoroughly unmethodical to place any reliance upon the chance that some miraculous element may ultimately prove to be within the realm of possibility. Moreover, the elements which *we* call miraculous appealed to minds hardly capable of determining delicate questions of possibility and probability. Such questions did not and would not occur to them, and consequently we should not confuse our more rationalistic and critical attitude to the data with the naïve attitude of those among whom the stories of the miraculous prevailed.

facts; and people in all walks of life often reveal more by their attitude to a thing than by their expressed opinion of or contribution to it. In the Old Testament we should distinguish between what happened before the days of Moses and what the writers of the book of Genesis believed to have happened (p. 63, note 1). The ordinary mind freely accepts or rejects the whole or large parts of it. One critical method is to endeavour to separate the genuine from the improbable and the impossible. But if it stopped there, it would merely present us with sundry historical data. On the other hand, directly we regard the book as a *bona fide* account of what was believed, we supplement the purely rationalistic and narrowly-historical aims by attention to the human and psychological aspects. This third attitude treats the book as a source, not merely of history, but of human nature, as exemplified by certain unknown writers at certain dates which have to be approximately ascertained. It corrects the purely and merely historical endeavour, and, though equally insistent upon rational and searching criticism, recognizes a larger meaning in history. It is characteristic of this attitude, that it more nearly resembles the first, the thoroughly traditional, than the second, the merely rationalistic, though at the cost of a relinquishing of certain earlier views. All three show a distinctive desire for history, but the third is a necessary supplement of the more characteristically "destructive" attitude, which in turn was inevitable if the first was to progress.

The instinctive desire for history.—To take other examples. While Old Testament criticism weakens or destroys the setting of psalms or prophecies, the value for religious experience remains untouched. But criticism goes on to search for a new setting, and looks for the true date of the psalm or the prophecy, thus giving a greater fulness to the history of some other period. It is not content with the merely negative result. Again,

when we compare the books of Kings and of Chronicles, we soon find that the latter is relatively less trustworthy than the former. Now, if we refrain from criticism, we may gloss over, obscure, or ignore the difficulties. On the other hand, if we are critical, we frankly recognize the differences and endeavour to recover the authentic history. To be satisfied with this historical residuum and to ignore the unhistorical portions is unmethodical. On further investigation we find that traditions have evidently developed, we come to understand different attitudes and standpoints, and, in general, the course of enquiry is tending not only to get better information upon that period with which the two books deal—our primary task—but it is also giving us much evidence for the trend of ideas, the development of thought, the existence of different interests and outlooks at later times. Obviously as this process continues we are acquiring a much better and wider knowledge of the Old Testament as a whole, of ancient Palestine, and of the history of man in one part of the globe, and thus ultimately, from the purely religious point of view, we have a better historical knowledge of the course of religious experience than we should otherwise have. Instead of being content with what we consider to be the history of the period in question, we acquire much information which not only illuminates *our* special task, but is useful for other subjects which *others* are undertaking. Thus, while narrow specialism tends to become injurious both to the enquirer and his subject, the more comprehensive type of investigation gives the enquirer a wider grasp, enables him to appeal to a wider field, and ultimately assists the whole field. In this way, the single “branch” adds to the welfare of itself and of the entire “tree”; the part is beneficial to itself and to the whole of which it is part. Change and development thus come in the parts, but by a sane individualism or specialism which does not forget that every individual is an integral

part of the environment and every special branch is only a branch, after all, of the tree of knowledge. The history of the part cannot be severed from that of the whole.

The process of development.—The process in the world of thought is twofold: there is a breaking down, a disruption, and a destruction of one body of ideas, and also a building up and a construction of another, vaster and with larger interconnexions. It can be seen in the history of Old Testament criticism, and it is characteristic of all development. If we call the twofold process, a “breaking-down” and a “building-up,” or the like, we unfortunately suggest the notion of actual rebuilding with old materials. The old materials, however, have evolved and are in a new form. It may be preferable to liken the process to the katabolism and anabolism of biological science. In enlisting the biological terms we at least banish the possibility of objectifying thought in that static manner which is common to us all, and we gain the possibility of more fruitful means of “visualizing,” as it were, the characteristics of the development of thought. If we consider the process as it appears in our own psychical growth or in the history of some study we find that it cannot be visualized as a building or rebuilding, rather may we compare some given development to the growth of an organism. And when there is profound change and the old reappears in a new form or shape, then it is helpful to think, not of the destruction of buildings and of some fresh erection upon new foundations, but of the relationships we constantly see in organic evolution or when we compare the vicissitudes of organisms (*e.g.* the growth of the butterfly). This enables us to keep in our mind both the significant differences and the equally significant resemblances.

Fairy tales and supernaturalism.—In the meanwhile, by setting aside questions of historical value or of credibility we take our material as examples of what was

felt and thought. So as regards the most incredible or preposterous of legends and myths, whatever we may think of them, and however they may elude or fall outside historical enquiry, they have a value—even as stories and anecdotes have among us—in that they illuminate real feelings, ideas, aims, and modes of thought. And this is a value they will always possess. They indicate types of mind that persist. Now, we readily tolerate and enjoy some tales that are imaginative and impossible; but somewhere a line is drawn. We have different attitudes, according as we expect trustworthy data or wish only to be interested and amused. But there are limits. Some utterly impossible narratives are in every way fascinating and delightful, others less impossible are merely preposterous and tiresome. Thus, the horizon of our imagination is not limitless; the greater and grander world which we sometimes seem to enjoy in our rarer moments has its logic. And we can scarcely doubt that the most blissful and entrancing vision of some better state of existence must have a certain reasonableness, failing which it would not appeal to us. The reasonableness may not be that of our current existence, but unless our mind implicitly realized that there was some order within that other sphere, the vision would surely neither please nor satisfy. It is noteworthy, also, that, as Mr. Chesterton has pointed out, fairy tales are generally marked from beginning to end by some central idea: “the idea that peace and happiness can only exist on some condition . . . the whole happiness of fairy-land hangs upon a thread, upon one thread”¹ Break the one law and all goes wrong. The supernatural realm, like the world of imagination, has its reasonableness, and it is exceedingly instructive to observe how popular opinion has regarded the relations between man and the Unseen. There is a mixture of freedom and restraint which contrasts

¹ *All Things Considered*, p. 256.

with the more austere attitude of the established religions, though it finds analogies in some examples of mysticism and personal religion. The spirits may be friendly, but they must be respected; the powers of the supernatural realm may be beneficial, but they have claims. Here, among the people, and outside the more exclusive cults, are the indications of a supernaturalism, related to systematized religion, but more akin to the life and thought of rudimentary communities. In fairy tales we have what we also find in more serious narrative, though intended for popular use—*e.g.* in the stories of Eden and of the Tower of Babel—the implicit recognition or the explicit inculcation of the profound difference between the “natural” and the “supernatural,” a difference which is the essential characteristic of all religion.¹

Fairy tales and ideas of evolution.—Fairy tales and other “unhistorical” lore are often valuable for the questions they raise of the borrowing and adjustment of material, the representation of popular or local interests, and the interrelation of peoples. Sometimes the evidence will point to some earlier and more advanced culture from which the data were borrowed, or of which they may preserve some “survivals.” Now, at the present day there will be outside the more “cultured” thought, a thought that is relatively “rudimentary,” and a little observation will show that the peasantry of both Western and Eastern Europe seem to be very widely severed from the advanced thought of the world of knowledge. But it is also evident that when any civilization has declined, there has been a greater prominence of the less cultured, lower, and rudimentary tendencies. Consequently, when we deal with fragmentary or isolated evidence of this type it will often be difficult to determine whether it was coexistent with some higher culture (in which case it emanates from the “lower” or more popular circles), or whether it came

¹ See the writer's *The Foundations of Religion*, pp. 53 *sqq.*

before or after the rise of some culture. Our ideas of evolution might tempt us to infer that evidence for relatively primitive beliefs or practices *must* obviously be earlier than evidence representing some higher stage. But, as we can now see, there are other alternatives. If we imagine an evolution of cult, B, C, D, E, and if we have some rudimentary feature x , the fact that it is rudimentary may lead us to place it early (call it xa). On the other hand, it might coexist with B, C, etc. (xb , xc , etc.). Or again it might, like certain data from mediaeval Palestine, come after a line of evolution (xe or xf). Obviously, therefore, in every given case of an x we must know more of its context before we can determine its place in evolution. Here, then, are problems which urgently require careful examination, because, although xa , xc , and xe may be very similar, there are doubtless subtle differences which could be recognized, even when our datum x is presented to us in a fragmentary form.¹ Not only are the problems important for certain historical and other enquiries, but they are involved with our rough-and-ready conceptions of development, evolution, and survival, and therefore with the unreflective and unconscious "philosophy" that actuates our notions of the further progress of society and thought. Thus, fairy tales and the like may contain much that is "useless," even the study of them may seem "useless"; but the student of humanity can call nothing common, and on probing beneath the surface, we perceive that they bring with them questions of more than academic interest.

The pursuit after truth.—When retrospect shows us what has resulted from the search after Truth, we may see that though men may appear to take devious and

¹ A practical example of the problem is afforded by the presence in the Old Testament of evidence representing "rudimentary" ideas. The same sort of problem also occurs in dealing with organic evolution; and no doubt the physical and the psychical problems will have solutions that can be shown to be similar.

circuitous paths, each to satisfy his own personal ideals, there has been a progress towards more complete conceptions, towards a much fuller Truth. But it was not due either to those who were speedily satisfied, or to those who were actuated by relatively specialistic aims, but rather to the joint result of all. The attitude which may be called conservative feels a loss of value when Biblical criticism denies the authorship of some psalm or prophecy or the historical value of some narrative. There is a second attitude which rests content with this negative and destructive criticism. But there is a third attitude which continues to search for a new author, a new age, or a new historical background and framework. The first and third are closely akin, yet we should not have the third unless the period of destructive criticism had intervened. It is the second tendency which is sterile and dangerous, and is opposed both to native sense and critical enquiry ; it is satisfied with the discovery of error and would reject the whole as surely as the first has accepted the whole. The third is significant because it is in a sense a reversion or rather a reassertion, it aims at what may or may not be possible, but it is as true an instinct as that expressed in the first tendency (cf. p. 256).

The historical context.—There is a certain satisfaction in rehabilitating, though in a new form, some inheritance from the past, and in finding some fresh value in our ancient sources. Thereby do we forge a new link with the past, and facing the future, have the past behind us as our support. This historical instinct, this desire to bring material into touch with something clear and definite in history, seems to be an implicit indication of our feeling that we are one with a larger and more permanent whole. Our very resentment when some familiar incidents of history are attacked, and our reliance upon historical and other authorities outside us in space and time suggest how instinctively we, transitory beings of a few years, join

ourselves to the Before and After. Furthermore, this anxiety to find some historical context or framework finds an interesting parallel in the tendency to inculcate teaching by means of concrete example or by that which can be seen or visualized. When edifying principles are to be impressed upon children, they are best presented, not in some abstract form, apart from time or space, but in a context of persons, places, and sometimes of periods. Children must have a framework for their minds to "see" the principles in action, and it is interesting to notice that among rudimentary peoples, mimetic ceremony has an important part in preserving and teaching the religious and historical traditions. In this way the traditions are impressed upon both actors and observers. Thus we may observe the necessity of giving an appropriate context to any principle that is to appeal. What is to appeal must be wrapped up in such a way that it can be assimilated, and the character of the recipient has always to be considered, whether we desire to influence the child or the adult, the savage or the civilized, or even the growth of some particular branch of thought. What is to appeal must fit a context ; what does appeal or has appealed is not some isolated, mechanical belief or fancy, but that which is bound up with feeling and thought. And for this reason it persists.

Some applications of the preceding. — We note that it is characteristic of the "primitive" type to *act* the principle and not to state it copy-book fashion. The former has the advantage of actively stimulating our natural psychical development ; the latter leaves us more passive and acquiescent. In the former, our human nature will instinctively recognize the principle, in the latter the principle is extracted and presented to us. May one not observe a similar difference between the cinema and the theatre ? At the cinema the audience will supply for themselves the appropriate feeling, whereas

the theatre tends to give us the necessary sentiment ready-made. The difference is essentially that between active participation and passive reception, between one's own personal discovery and growth, and interest in others.¹ In religion a significant feature is always the part taken by the ordinary individual: is he an active participant with the rest, or is he passive? In the latter case, the religion tends to be remote and the individual will seek an outlet elsewhere. Whatever becomes too exclusive, specialistic, and removed from the ordinary environment and the ordinary thought is injurious to itself and leaves the average mind dissatisfied and hungry. So, in social and political affairs, individuals must feel they have some active share in that whole of which they are part, and conversely that in which they have an active part is always more real to them. The problem of individuals and the "wholes" to which they belong is, therefore, of vital importance. A newly-proposed measure which involved considerable dislocation and change might interfere too seriously with the environment as a whole. It might be intrinsically admirable, but retrospect invariably reveals a certain conformity to type, as a result of which novelties and changes are adjusted, modified, or even repudiated. The general advance of the environment is comprehensive, whereas that of any part of it is specialistic. In Biblical criticism the denial of the Davidic authorship of the Twenty-third Psalm marks a significant advance in specialistic research, but the continued attempt to find

¹ In puzzles and jokes and other little pleasures, the fun lies in doing the thing for one's self, in appreciating it on one's own account. There is little joy when we are not psychically exercised, except, of course, when our self is more concerned in its sympathy with others, and then their pleasure is ours. But there are these subtle psychological differences which play a great part in making and marring the happiness of life. Some of the unrest manifested in "democratic" ideals may be due to the desire to take an active part in things which are interesting and important—a protest against grandmotherly legislation.

an historical background for this, or any other passage, is not due to any submission to convention, but is an instance of the tendency which shows itself when the ordinary reader loves to associate the Psalm with the ancient Hebrew king. It is a reassertion of the old historical sense and of the personal interest in figures. The environment is like the individual in that it tends consciously or unconsciously to reassert that which had been suppressed or excised under the influence of some relatively narrow and specialistic activity which in itself may be highly desirable. Here, then, are psychical processes which must be the first concern of any endeavour to deal "scientifically" with the application of religious, sociological, economic, or political theories to an environment. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.* It is this persistence and reassertion which stands out against the naïve assumption that we can always "educate" people to our own ideas. The study of the processes in the development from prehistoric men upwards, and in the psychical development of every individual, deals empirically with positive evidence, and corrects the theories of those who would educate others without understanding the nature of the psychical development by which they themselves had profited.

The question of attitude.—When we study religious material as apart from ordinary questions of accuracy, authenticity, credibility, and the like, there is this important necessity of observing what has persisted, has been cherished and believed. On purely rationalistic grounds we may repudiate all that offends our sense of what is rational, but for purposes of research we have to pay heed to what evidently appealed. We may not believe that supernatural beings descend and take human or animal form, and we may reject all transformations of this sort ; but when we find such beliefs as these held in all sincerity by people to-day or in a distant past, which, considering

the antiquity of man, is as yesterday, neither the past nor the present has any meaning for us unless we attempt to realize that these ideas have a normal existence. They have been and are held by men of flesh and blood, who are perfectly rational in other respects where we are rational, and who, psychologically speaking, are more like us than they are unlike. For purposes of research we are not required to believe the evidence, but it is evidence which must find a place in our conceptions of the Universe and of human nature, and it must be approached with both understanding and criticism. If, from a certain standpoint, all evidence into which the supernatural enters is ruled out as virtually unworthy of serious attention, this rules out an enormous amount of evidence, including the religious experience of modern times. But if we allow that the evidence throws light upon *bona fide* feelings, thoughts, ideas, convictions, etc., we do justice to modern intelligent and civilized people, even though we admit what they perhaps would be inclined to repudiate. Already in dealing with survivals, it was pointed out that for purposes of impartial enquiry no distinction can be drawn between one religion and another (p. 196); we cannot start with any presupposition severing any one religion from the supernaturalistic data elsewhere. Our attitude to evidence which we repudiate implies a standard which is the result of development, and unless we think that we have progressed all along the line, we may easily take an attitude to evidence which is an implicit expression of a superiority which it is perhaps easier to claim than to justify. In condemning the thought of others we implicitly rate ours higher, and fix a standard by which we in turn may perchance be judged. At all events it is irrational to repudiate evidence without seeking to explain it psychologically. We have developed to a stage where we readily have an attitude of judgment upon the past. We readily see

the absence of accuracy in the narratives and stories of the past, although we in turn do not necessarily scrutinize that which appeals to us ; we judge from a standard which we do not and perhaps could not consistently maintain, and it is conceivable that from a higher standpoint modern subtle practices of suppression of fact, and false suggestion or insinuation, might be as much condemned as the staring and prominent faults we can find in the past. In our attitude to supernaturalistic and other evidence which we condemn, we are apt to forget that the very development which enables us to estimate it as we do is the result of mysterious processes of which we are almost entirely unconscious.

Conclusion.—I. The great changes in the past have no meaning for us unless we are prepared to endeavour to understand them, and this involves our own selves and our mode of thought. We may be justified in saying that such and such data give us a mixture of true and false, of history and legend or myth, of rational and irrational, and so on, but statements of this kind rest upon a series of conclusions made from a modern standpoint. They do not mean that the people with whom these data are concerned were aware of this ; our descriptions are based upon the impressions data make on our minds. Thus it is that the religious rites and other ceremonies of the savage have sometimes been styled “ play.” This is to apply our estimate, to make a compromise between what is evidently serious to others and our frequent inability to take it as seriously for ourselves. Among children “ make believe ” and “ play ” have a very distinct element of seriousness. When the child plays at “ bear,” the fact that he is not a bear is irrelevant ; but it is very relevant an hour later when it is time for him to go to bed. Here are two orders of data, two different stages which are sometimes commingled. This commingling recurs when we from our level of thought

deal with the data belonging to another level. The existence of the inaccurate and the incredible in the lives of saints has probably no relevance for the pious ; but the critical historian must carefully observe such features, for he deals not with the religious psychology of the believer, but with the biography of the saint. We commonly commingle two orders when we confuse subjective and objective history, or when we, from some particular rationalizing point of view, mingle literal and symbolical interpretation of data. The question whether particular inaccuracies are relevant depends entirely upon the particular need and interest.

II. When evidence is adduced from the past to point some remark it is very easy to contend that the comparison cannot be justified, there is no strict parallel. But the answer is that there are no *exact* parallels anywhere in history, politics, law, religion, or experience. Each of the things compared belongs to its own particular environment or body of thought. We "see" parallels and we accept those that fit in with our feeling and thought, while in other cases we repudiate those that are alleged because we see the differences. We *see* parallels, others reject them—the process is often quite intuitive and spontaneous ; but even when the keenest wits are employed opinion will differ touching the validity of some alleged parallel. By slipshod and by subtle means alike we could find or reject parallels in the most promiscuous manner—both instinct and intelligence can go astray. We have the power of "seeing" resemblances and these may or may not be valid. But when the resemblances or parallels are rejected, it is always instructive to see where error has been made. That people differ is an everyday occurrence, but when we try and understand why and wherein they differ we gain light upon the movement of thought. The modern accumulation of data allows, by a promiscuous use of the comparative method, very

plausible and apparently convincing arguments and expositions which make for some movement of thought, but are severally good or bad, and if we have not the patience or the ability to scrutinize and criticize them, judgment is readily based upon their appeal to other considerations, or, in view of the differences of opinion, they are ignored. In general, when we consider changes—objective and subjective—what from a crude rationalistic point of view is the reverse of conscious intellectual procedure, is often that which is most potent in development of thought. Our attitude to past thought or to any thought with which we disagree may seem justifiable, but it is the result of our development, and we have to allow for the existence of attitudes which shall see the imperfections in our attitude even as we see them in others. The important factors in change and development are those of which we are largely unconscious ; there is a certain preparation of the soil ; there is a certain process of imitation ; there is an influence of one personality upon another—all mysterious, largely elusive, but invariably making for some movement. The changes that make the gap between us and primitive man are profound, but they are not so profound as the considerations which emerge when we reflect upon the processes involved.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ENVIRONMENT AND CHANGE

II. SOME ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVILIZATION AND RELIGION

Cultural resemblances and differences.—In studying environments in other lands and at other ages which are separated from our level of thought by a large gap we frequently encounter relatively fine and elevated beliefs and practices. These features awake our appreciation, whether they concern religion or ethics or merely culture in general. They are of peculiar interest when we find them in environments which have not evolved as ours has, or in civilizations which for some reason have decayed and died. We are struck by them because we associate them with features in our own environment, and on this account there is sometimes a more or less unconscious tendency to exaggerate or to repudiate them, to increase or to diminish the resemblance between the two environments concerned. The chief difficulty is to determine what can be inferred with approximate certainty from the appearance of some isolated datum which elsewhere is bound up with organic bodies of thought with which we are familiar.¹ If a savage can drive an engine, or a baboon can be trained

¹ *E.g.* a triad of gods, a temple, sun-worship, a rain-charm. The question has already been raised. pp. 158 *sqq.*

to ride a bicycle, we are not so rash as to assume that they necessarily possess that thought and experience which would enable them to invent, manufacture, or repair the object. We can infer that the consciousness of each differs from that of the *average* savage or baboon, but precisely what development has resulted it is not easy to determine. We can at least safely assume that, unless they had a considerably greater intelligence than they formerly needed, sooner or later the engine and bicycle would be useless. If energy is required to produce certain conditions it is still needed in order to maintain or improve them.

Fluctuation and variation.—If in any environment we see what we know to be due to some considerable intellectual skill or attainment—in the sciences or the arts—it does not follow that all the members possess similar mental gifts in this direction ; as a matter of fact, the most important benefits of material civilization rest upon the skill of a relatively small number of individuals. The downfall of civilizations in the past shows us how an environment may be unable or disinclined to continue the promotion of those advantages which it had possessed in its earlier and more flourishing days. We have only to look at Crete and the lands of the Bible to contrast the remarkable vicissitudes of culture between to-day and the past. The decline seems to permeate the whole, and even so elementary a duty as methodical irrigation appears to have been discontinued when Babylonian civilization decayed. It would seem that the age which has not toiled to produce the civilization it enjoys must labour to keep it up to the level, and that there is a great interconnexion of factors responsible for the slow decline of activities which not singly, but collectively, had formerly raised the environment.

Culture, a collective whole.—A civilization with its institutions and organizations, with various forms of

religious, scientific, legal, and other thought, may seem to be a very stable thing. But history undeceives us. Indeed, it is only on reflexion that we perceive how readily we *appear* to be able to do without the several features that make for civilization, provided of course we can be fed, clothed, and interested. Whether this or that is necessary to civilization is a point on which individuals will differ, but the whole environment has all the things which separate sections of the community consider necessary, *e.g.* race - courses, public - houses, libraries, and places of worship. On the one hand, by experiment or by having to "rough it," we may find that we can do without many of the apparent necessities of civilization; we do not seem to be so entirely dependent upon education and upon modern discoveries and industries as we imagine. On the other hand, through the complexity of the civilization thought is stimulated. Bigger buildings and larger ships bring new technical problems; new inventions disturb existing conditions and new problems are introduced; the demand and the supply go hand in hand, and in countless ways there is a connexion between complexity of civilization, of society, and of thought. No conception of civilization is adequate that does not consider the steps in the past. The analytical method certainly reveals the complexity of civilization, but the more dynamic method of viewing the whole process is exceedingly illuminating in that we see how much has been due to interests and enquiries apparently not of direct utilitarian value. In the past we can perceive an aggregate of interests contributing subsequently to raise civilization to its present position. We cannot say, therefore, that what has no useful function now is not contributing either to its maintenance or to its advance. As it is, specialistic interest in anthropology, sociology, etc., associates itself with the application of results to the immensely practical problems in civilized

and uncivilized lands ; psychological research has come to the fore and is contemporary with the increasing prominence of religious and aesthetic problems in life and thought. On the one hand, the average man is indebted for his ordinary views of industrial, social, and other concerns to the intermediaries (publicists, politicians, teachers, etc.) between himself and the more secluded specialistic and individualistic thinkers ; on the other hand, there are tendencies in the apparently " remote " fields of logic, religious psychology, and philosophy, which, though not yet co-ordinated, will inevitably be full of meaning for the ordinary thought of some near future.

The movement can encourage fatalism.—But if we can do without much of that which we call civilization, when civilization decays simpler conditions reappear, life is less complex, and we see in the lands of dead civilizations the general deterioration in thought. Apparently we cannot have it both ways. Man may live under his own vine and fig tree, and life in certain tropical and sub-tropical lands shows the result. On the other hand, when life is more complex, thought is more keenly stimulated to cope with difficulties and problems which it has itself provoked, but which the uncivilized and simpler environments do not experience. The development of thought and that of civilization form one whole, and there is reason to believe that evolution " has been primarily an evolution of mental structure " ; " mental evolution leads the way." ¹ There might seem to be something fatalistic in this idea, as though forces were sweeping us onward to our fate ; and certainly such a conviction, which is not a novel one, would appear to coincide with a modern tendency to regard the course of events as the outcome of abstract evolutionary powers

¹ Cf. W. M'Dougall, *Psychology*, p. 174 *seq.*, on the evolution of consciousness in the animal world.

impelling men to play out their lives until some limit is reached. Certainly also, when we consider that the present conditions in Western Europe are the outcome of a series of stages which take us back to its days of barbarism, when Rome was at its height, and to the glories of old Oriental empires, a fatalistic attitude has its excuse. Our stage is but the outcome of a development in a particular area, and the decay and fall of ancient civilizations, after they had reached a relatively high level, suggest that when there is no upward movement there is death, and that there are definite limits beyond which even modern civilization cannot proceed. Hence we may talk of the stretched elastic that must snap, the tower growing higher and higher that some day must fall, the age that has run past itself, the organism that has become too highly differentiated, or that cannot adapt itself to the environment. But all such notions beg the question. If the growth of civilization and the progress of thought are rightly described by our metaphors, then indeed the case must be hopeless. But we have no accurate metaphors; we have only a pessimism, an underlying feeling, expressing itself externally in a way that gives it an adequately melancholy outlet. If we could describe the processes of thought, then we should doubtless be able to diagnose the conditions so accurately that the problem would be settled and there would not be room for both pessimism and optimism. Fortunately the science of thought has not reached that point. Civilization depends upon a large aggregate of individuals, their inheritance from the past, and their divers interests and aims for the immediate future. At the bottom it rests upon psychical considerations—the spirit animating individuals,—and in this way it is bound up with the more profound and mysterious processes which are at work in man. Now, when we study any period of history we find a commingling of good and of evil factors—the successes

and the disasters appear inevitable because of the good or the evil conditions that preceded. But while retrospect will show us the genetic connexion between successive stages in the past, we can never tell which of any conflicting factors of to-day will ultimately outweigh the others. Sequels will prove inevitable: the mind will look back and see the relevant data that prove the interconnexion; but there is no foundation for the assumption that the subtle interconnexion which retrospect reveals is uninfluenced by the prospective efforts of individuals. But the retrospective field is larger than the prospective.¹

The triumph of mind.—In the development of history, of any body of thought, and of any individual, the movement involves large complexes. Problems take a new form; some difficulties disappear, others reappear; and throughout there is an effort to gain equilibrium and harmony. Animal and human psychology testifies to the appropriate relationship between the consciousness and the environment. The normal creature is usually equipped with the means of coping with the normal problems of its environment. The environment itself may be said to develop, because the circle of conditions in which the creature is placed widens as it develops. Of course it may be disputed whether the change of conditions stimulate the growth of the consciousness—the psychical ability—of the creature, or whether the reverse has been the case. So far as man is concerned, both may be true; for the nature of one's environment is so characteristically psychical—involving feelings, interests, and aims—that it is difficult to understand intelligently how the process can be thought of in other than ultimately psychical terms.² The important fact

¹ Whenever we look back upon any past we find that the sequels of activities involved a larger interconnexion than did the contemporary plans and proposals, which were more departmental or specialistic.

² There are two alternatives. (a) We may make all process non-

is the apparent non-existence of difficulties and problems in our world of life and thought until we become aware of them.¹ While all increase of consciousness is accompanied with an increase of problems, the effort to realize them is the first step on the road to simplifying them ; for the difficulty becomes more tangible when it is stated so clearly that all its various interconnexions are seen. When we look back upon our earlier difficulties they often appear relatively small or even trifling ; it is often forgotten how real and unsurmountable they were at the time. Consequently, if there has entered into our life to-day some new unsurmountable difficulty, it will not be unsurmountable for any intrinsic reason, but because of our present estimate of it. Significantly enough, the average mind does not recognize defeat. In the pathetic cases where men have thrown up the sponge and taken their own lives, human nature resolutely regards it as "temporary insanity." From rudimentary man and upwards there has been a horror of suicide : man must not and need not be beaten by his environment. Mind can cope with the problems of the environment it has helped to produce. This has always been so. Primitive men had their own difficulties—the prehistoric man had the prehistoric beasts ; there were difficulties which *we* recognize, but which would not impress themselves

psychical (viz. chemical, physical, mechanical) ; this procedure is useful for description, but it conveys nothing to our experience. It is as though pepper, paper, and piper could be analysed and written P³RE², P²RAE, and P²REI. Or (b) we may draw a line between the psychical and the physical aspects, though, since the line would depend upon our knowledge and definitions, the differentiation would be somewhat inconclusive.

¹ When we talk of a Providence that looks after men—and even after the drunken—we recognize the fact that in some way individuals frequently escape difficult and problematical situations. Often they are subconsciously or instinctively avoided (*e.g.* when bicycling, or walking along the street reading a newspaper), but in these cases the situations are surely not ignored by or unknown to some part of our psychical system.

upon him ; others would be " instinctively " met, as by us of to-day. But there would be a percentage that would call forth man's whole psychical being, and the advance of civilization represents the outcome of the work of those whose mind triumphed over contemporary conditions. Here are involved all individuals who passed through crises similar in kind but varying in intensity ; and in this transition again and again the individual finds that his religion is involved. In coping with difficulties the transitional and critical period is very often unrealized, the steps are taken unconsciously or automatically ; the transition is so normal that we do not recognize that there has been any crisis. But there is no absolute difference between the ordinary, the less ordinary, and the extraordinary crises ; the difference is estimated subjectively—by the subject ; and, as a rule, only on the more exceptional occasions does he recognize the difference between his " unaided efforts " and " divine aid." From the theistic point of view, either a Supreme Power intervenes only in those cases where His help is explicitly recognized by the individual, or in thus limiting His help we gravely err.¹ The progress of civilization is the progress of mind. The mind helps to make new problems as it progresses, and in attacking the problems it has perceived it draws upon its profounder depths. And in this process religion finds man sustained by supernatural aid : man in his problems is not left to himself.

Ancient artistic and other skill.—From these more general remarks we pass next to more concrete cases. At the outset we are wont to estimate an environ-

¹ Often there is a tendency to find the Deity only in the more marvellous and remarkable phenomena where our knowledge is at fault and they strike us as extraordinary. But through knowledge the extraordinary tends to become ordinary, while through experience the most ordinary things frequently become extraordinary. The antinomy seems to lie in the nature of our existence and in the difference between the detached intellectualistic part of ourselves and the whole self.

ment from those phenomena which are presented to us : one or more parts of a whole are viewed by us in the light of our experience and knowledge. To take a particular example, consider the remarkable specimens of prehistoric drawing and painting as illustrated especially from Spain and the South of France.¹ They amaze us by their skill, their extraordinary merits, their naturalism and spirit. The admiration we cannot but feel for these artists is enhanced by the fact that the most remarkable of the paintings were found in a cave to which no light had ever penetrated, and sometimes in almost inaccessible places. But clearly we should be rash if we jumped to the conclusion that these "artists"—and we should doubtless call them savages if we saw them—had that richness of life and thought which we might associate with artistic ability. On the one hand, we may realize that a high stage of artistic representation is not in itself a proof of a lofty level of what we call civilization ; on the other hand, if we regard all art as evidence of a certain culture we could not deny it to these prehistoric artists. If we determine what is indispensable for all artistic skill and for the accomplishment of these paintings in particular, we should gain sound positive evidence. But it would be very difficult and hazardous to say with any fulness of what other things these men were capable. Excavation at Gezer in Palestine has revealed a tunnel hewn in the rock which is a splendid specimen of workmanship of pre-Israelite times ; the walls of ancient Jericho have proved, on excavation, to be a triumph of military engineering ; the elaborate earth-works of old-time "mound-builders" suggest a fertility of mind which surely was not confined to these constructions. And so one might go on and record data which point to mental activity of no mean order, and which, if we are not careful,

¹ See, *e.g.*, the reproductions in the *Ency. Brit.* articles "Archaeology" and "Painting."

will tempt us to jump from the part to the whole, and assume that the individuals or their environment had reached an equally high stage of observation, reflexion, and fertility of resource in other directions.

Ancient intelligence.—Very wide generalizations have sometimes been made on the strength of such evidence as the preceding. Thus, it has been said that the remains of carving on mammoth ivory found in Périgord represent an intellectual aptitude on the part of palaeolithic men of the Reindeer Period in Central France in no degree inferior to the average Frenchman of to-day. It has been asserted that the cerebral organization possessed by prehistoric man allows us to infer that he had a high intellectual and moral nature. On such lines as these it has been argued that traditions of a Golden Age and of a Fall are amply justified : man's earliest stage was his best, he had been a good and noble creature before he fell and became a savage.¹ There is something attractive in this very remarkable generalization. It appears to offer a very simple explanation of the recurrence of the more elevated features in low levels, and of the numerous examples of deterioration which can be actually witnessed. But if the view explains some evidence, it ignores too much, and, in presupposing a primitive Divine Revelation, tends to confine to particular circles a later and truer recognition of the Deity. None the less, the theory of a degradation would seem to agree with the common conviction that man is always below the level of his best. Moreover, as will be noticed later, the conviction of a return to an earlier, higher, and more spiritual stage has expressed itself in many ways. Consequently, there is psychological evidence which we cannot dismiss, it has a value quite apart from any theories of prehistoric conditions, and it is a question whether we have not here

¹ Cf., e.g., J. A. Macculloch, *Comparative Theology* (1902), pp. 6 seq., 142 ; W. St. Clair Tisdall, *Comparative Religion* (1909), pp. 30 seq.

a confusion of the psychical development of the individual with that of the history of his race.¹ Next, as regards the large cerebral capacity of prehistoric man, it is difficult not to infer with Dr. Haddon that "brain, not brawn, has been the essential factor in the evolution of man."² Primitive man has laid the foundations upon which subsequent ages have built. If we consider carefully the activities of daily life which *we* take for granted, but which even the highest animal cannot do, and if we take into account the conservatism of the environment and the thought provoked when changes occur, we cannot doubt that our prehistoric ancestors would need capacious brains in their first efforts to get on terms with Nature. "There were many brave men before Agamemnon." But if no bard has celebrated them—and their problems were assuredly as difficult to them as those of to-day are to us—their achievements in climbing the first steps which separate us from the animals depended upon a courage and a skill which we can hardly realize. Indeed, that enormous advance is in many respects more striking than the differences between savage and modern civilized life.

Limited to particulars.—Now it may be true that the carving or painting of palaeolithic man is, all things considered, no whit inferior to that of a modern civilized European, but the average European of to-day lives in an environment the like of which we obviously cannot assume in prehistoric times. We cannot infer, therefore, that the brain which could produce such carving or painting could also produce the thoughts and ideas and could direct the activities we find in a civilized area. We have only to analyse a modern environment and consider it historically to see that the notion is impossible. We may infer an ability to make use of and to enrich the environment, but what that was in the case of prehistoric man is

¹ See, *e.g.*, p. 210 note.

² *History of Anthropology* (1910), p. 75.

a matter for enquiry and speculation. The first thing to notice is that the prehistoric artists had (1) keen observation, (2) a sense of proportion, and (3) a feeling for accuracy, all relatively superior to what is found in the art of most modern savages. Next, while the *results* are more exceptional they depend upon factors that are in some degree common among all classes of people. In fact, the three features mentioned do not depend merely upon the progress of civilization ; they are innate endowments working upon that which the environment offers. Observation and alertness are necessary for those who live by hunting, as those savages no doubt did, and, so far, the qualities are those that would be normally exercised in daily life. But it does not follow that the features were distributed more generally ; special attainment in one direction does not imply an equal advance in others. For example, absolute accuracy is indispensable in the investigations of mathematicians, but if this cultivation of accuracy enabled them to apply it to other data, might we not expect them to reach similar results as regards political, social, and religious questions ?

Intelligence is directed by the environment. — Keen observation, too, is as common in low levels as in high, but we can only say that it is directed where it is directed—where interest has been aroused—and that it depends upon the individual's body of thought whether he be a scout, a botanist, a mathematician, or a student of political economy. When the Old Testament critic has observed contradictions, difficulties, and the like, it has sometimes been suggested that the data are really illusory—after all, they had not been noticed in the past by other enquirers. The reply is, that they were there waiting to be observed, as surely as rocks, stones, and fossils had to await centuries before the study we call Geology came into being. Observation is guided by the environment which encourages or impedes it according to

the thought of the time. The idea of a composite origin of various books of the Old Testament could hardly attract when it was generally understood that each was divinely inspired, or free from error, or by a single author. But the thought of the time encouraged zealous efforts to explain away the difficulties discovered by isolated "critics." The "scholarship" of one age is not always that of another. Keen observation leads a man in one environment to speak of trees "from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall," but in another environment that man may be a botanist or a scientist contributing to the development of the civilization and culture which he enjoys. Yet unless that man has been able to gain the necessary knowledge and to receive the appropriate stimulus from the environment, his observation may be keen, but it will be along other lines. An environment that neither encourages nor feels the utility of observation in a particular direction may injure itself more than the individual who to himself is true.

Innate qualities.—There is a natural interrelation between innate gifts that are independent of time and land, and the conditions in the environment. A young child may draw, or may play a musical instrument excellently, but we all recognize that there are things connected with these accomplishments which depend entirely upon what can be offered to the child by an environment more experienced than he is. So also, relatively profound reflexion is not wanting in lowly levels, or among children or savages; and although it is only too easy to attribute to the evidence a meaning to which it is not entitled, it is certainly erroneous to suppose that a lowly civilization involves a low form of thought. As a matter of fact, those whose thought has stimulated the world have not necessarily been either the most learned or indeed the most highly civilized. A child, a

savage, a ploughman, a tinker, an actor, and a carpenter may astonish us with their insight and discernment, and we are obliged to realize that there is a difference between a knowledge that depends mainly upon the stage of civilization or culture, and the knowledge gained by observation, reflexion, and personal experience in any environment however humble. The features which we can readily appreciate are not necessarily due to the environment ; it would be truer to say that their form is shaped by it. What we consider essentially admirable and noble may not be in an individual or in a group distinguished for deep knowledge and culture. And, conversely, the distinctive marks of an advanced civilization are certainly not those features which we can find in the lower levels. If the "publicans and sinners" of human history display noble qualities psychologically similar to those which give us a conviction of our own superiority, what thank have we ?

Restriction of ideals to the group.—In dealing with the lower levels it may easily be objected that the relatively high ideals or aims which we find in them are too restricted, because they are confined to a particular group, tribe, or people. But is not this very largely true of all levels ? It is only to be expected that where there are common interests there will be aims for the joint welfare of all concerned ; it seems only natural to think first of one's union, class, party, or sect. The aims of any group, of whatever size, for and on behalf of its own interests, do not call for any special remark, and although we may see a growth in the character of the ideas prevailing in the groups, it is more important when we have to deal with the aims and ideals of one group in its relation to another. Now, although we can conceive prehistoric, primitive groups, the members of each of which were united by common aims, our evidence invariably takes us to later vicissitudes where there are groups within

groups. For certain purposes groups or areas may be regarded as units, but they will fall into smaller groups or units as regards sex, age, occupation, marriage-rights, exercise of authority, and so on. Even among rudimentary peoples the social organization is fairly complex, so that although a tribe or an area may be a unit as opposed to another tribe or area, we could find sections, classes, or sub-groups each with its appropriate and characteristic distinctions. We can find a useful analogy if we regard a university as a unit compared with other universities, and then observe that the constituent colleges could each be regarded as units, and that each could be further subdivided into graduates and undergraduates, and both of these again separated according to their studies or their recreations. But there would also be interconnexions, since we could take all the undergraduates from all the colleges who played cricket, or all those who were reading for some particular examination, or all those who belonged to some club or society. Thus, each man could belong to a variety of groups, each of which could be regarded as a unit, and each group would have a fairly well defined body of thought proper to it; so that, for example, the same man might have different nuclei of interests connected with his university, his college, his reading, his recreation, his club, and so forth. Now, upon the co-ordination of these nuclei or groups depends his progress.

The co-ordination of groups.—When we find social bodies with complex groupings, there is constant reshaping and readjustment, and at every step in the evolution of society there were groups with common interests which had to consider their relationship with other groups also with common interests. It is in the attitude of one group to another that we have to look for change and development, for when through social or political causes we get a growing interrelation of divers groups, there is the usual possibility of disturbed equi-

librium, of lack of coherence, and of absence of sympathy. The relatively selfish interests of any single group may be admirable and make for progress along relatively narrow lines ; but as the total environment becomes more extensive, the ideals must be tested not as regards any single group, but as regards the whole of which it forms a part. The real strength of a group lies not in itself, nor even in its numbers, but in its relation to all the other groups with which it is connected.¹ Here lies its stability. Now, when we turn to the field of religion, religious thought and ideas are commonly wrapped up with the supernatural being or beings who are felt to be more closely associated with one definite group rather than with any other. This is exemplified in the feeling of the group that its supernatural being is immediately related to it, as also in the various rites employed when an individual passes from one social group to the other. On the other hand, the more universalistic tendencies are so rare that where they do occur they attract notice. Both Judaism and Christianity have drawn the line between those within and those without the pale ; and Universalism—like Universal Brotherhood in the sphere of ethics—has generally been more theoretical than practical. In the evolution of religions, we find on one side the development of a conviction which extends the interest of

¹ An analogy to this is the fact that the real strength of any position, attitude, or theory lies in its relation to the whole field of data concerned (see p. 118). In some respects a group of individuals and a body of thought resemble each other more closely than anything else with which they might otherwise be compared. A position or theory or body of thought links together, in an appropriate manner, both data and individuals otherwise capable of being regarded independently and in isolation. For example, a political party is both a concrete body of very tangible individuals and a body of ideas and principles, but upon the latter depends the growth and fortunes of the former. The corporate spirit which links together the members of the party has its analogue in that which binds together the ideas and principles into one more or less coherent whole. The two enquiries, the movement of thought and that of individuals and groups, are very closely related. Cf. below, p. 381 *seq.*

the supernatural being of the group to those outside the group, and, on the other, there is that tendency which is opposed to universalism by refusing to identify religions externally different. Adjustment of thought is constantly taking place, but individuals usually are more ready to impose their ideas upon others, or for others to share them, than to accept those imposed upon them.

The extension of groups.—Between the simplest stage we can imagine—one or more independent, separate groups—and the largest conceivable union of all mankind into one universal group, there are the vicissitudes which are constantly readjusting the relations between groups and are aiming at establishing a greater coherence and equilibrium. Serious difference of opinion tends to the disintegration of a group ; while, as opinions converge, the tendency is towards a social unity. The aims are everywhere similar. They are for the removal of incoherence, incompatibility, and disequilibrium ; they are for the oneness of certain groups, even though it be at the expense of others ; they would do away with that which disunites, even though the opposing tendency feels that the movement means disunity and disaster. The aims in their ethical, social, and political aspects are for harmony and interdependence within the area concerned : the group, animated by its *esprit de corps*, would have others united with its body. In its religious aspect the harmony desired involves both the groups and the Unseen Power, the relationship between physical groups is extended to the supernatural realm. In either case the movement is for a greater extension, which succeeds when it is accompanied by synthesis and interconnexion. Ideals making for movement are—from their own point of view—for extension and strengthening of some interconnexion, conceptions of the supernatural being involved or excluded according as they may be regarded as definitely religious or not. Wars waged in the interests of religion, of ideals,

or of civilization, illustrate the readiness to maintain or to extend the aims of a group at the expense of other groups. The zeal and strenuousness with which men have fought when ideas and principles were involved exemplify the result when the profounder side of the consciousness is aroused. The ferocity and barbarity which have been manifested on such occasions among uncivilized peoples find their more polite parallel in the passions of enthusiastic individuals when they are opposed or criticized. We have merely to recognize certain facts which illustrate the vicissitudes of religion. The keener the zeal and the opposition, the fiercer the fight; intellectual argument gives way to cruder "primitive" measures in the anxiety to maintain what is felt to be right. The way in which the problems are simplified and the difficulties removed is the test of the positive advance of civilization. Sometimes the more individualistic few prove the winners, and sometimes it is the many, and when we take a long view of the past, it seems impossible to determine that one set of convictions was more "real" than another set. The realities of each age were the greatest of which men were capable, but the course of history is meaningless if we may not infer that the greatest realities of which even our age may be capable are relatively as incomplete as were those of the past.

The rise of Palestine and the Jews.—Keen zeal, eagerness, and the like do not alone account for the progress of mankind. Ancient Greece and Rome and the old Bible-lands are areas where we have abundant evidence for development and decay, for upward advance and fall. Palestine itself is a very striking example of an area with a gradually developing field of thought which subsequently became the chief factor in the history of civilization. From the purely historical point of view, however, it would seem as though the area was unable to advance beyond a certain point, and it is instructive,

therefore, to notice a few details in connexion with its development. The rise of the old monarchies of Israel and Judah may be associated with a period of weakness in the surrounding powers ; there were vast movements, in which it has been conjectured that the famous siege of Troy was only an incident. The Hebrew states took the opportunity of the prevailing stress and turmoil and established themselves among a number of other petty states. The extremity of the great Empires, whose civilization and culture we cannot but admire, afforded the opportunity for the Hebrews. Only a few centuries passed and these Empires decayed, there was another period of disaster and incoherence, the Hebrew states fell with others, and out of the ruins there arose a new reorganization in which we can discern the beginning of early orthodox Judaism. Yet, after the lapse of a few troubled centuries in which Palestine entered the Greek and Roman world, we come to the rise of Christianity and Rabbinical Judaism ; and the history of the spread and progress of these two is involved with further vicissitudes of a more purely political character, entailing far-reaching national dislocations. Perhaps even so rough and imperfect an outline as the preceding will be sufficient to indicate the chief links in the chain of the history. In this vast interconnexion of vicissitudes, it is instructive to notice that each age makes some contribution to its successor, and that the indebtedness of the conditions of each successive stage to all those that preceded it becomes increasingly complex.¹

¹ The general advance in spite of the fall of empires finds an analogy in the progress of knowledge in spite of the " overthrow " of some position or theory. In each case we come to perceive that the disaster affected only a part of some larger whole. A true way of regarding psychical vicissitudes is highly desirable if only that we may avoid the fallacious arguments and metaphors which materialize thought. Thus, although modern Palestine comes at the end of a long series of different cultural periods, we cannot say that the earlier lie buried under the later. The stratification we have in geology and in archaeology (*e.g.*

Contemporary and retrospective points of view.

—In tracing the interconnexion which links Western Europe with Oriental history of more than 3000 years ago, we deliberately ignore the subsequent fate of those areas that have fallen : the evolution of thought by which we have profited rides over the ruins of empires and states. The historian of 1000 years hence may perchance be able to add to the list. In all probability the average man spares no thought for ancient Egypt or Babylonia, or Greece, or any of the dead nations which have contributed in one way or another to modern religion and civilization. Our benefactors are not commemorated. But modern research, in making these lands live once more, is enabling us to understand, in a way which our fathers could not, the activities of these peoples. It is giving us a more discerning and more sympathetic acquaintance with those whose loss has been our gain. They mean more to us than they did ; we may not realize the extent of the debt, but archaeology and history combine to unite us more closely to the men of old, even as biological research is strengthening the link connecting all Life. All will agree that through the vicissitudes of the past we have been the gainers. But if we could throw ourselves back to some ancient points of view, and concentrate our attention first on one land and then on another, now at this age and now at that, we should have a great variety of impressions touching the success or the failure, the gain or the loss of the object of our interest. For example, there is no doubt that if we could see the point of view of certain Jews at the beginning of the

in the excavation of Palestinian sites) concerns material objects, and the application of the notion to psychical history is very suggestive. But it is dangerous. Only in the way that we can find underlying the thought of the man of sixty traces of his thought at the ages of three, eight, fifteen, twenty-one, etc., or that some study of to-day contains the traces of earlier stages—only so can we look “below” a culture for traces of the earlier strata.

Exile in the sixth century B.C., we should be profoundly dismayed at the disasters of the day, whereas somewhat later, at the period of reorganization, we should share their feeling that a new and happier age had dawned, although it so happens that events proved that it was not to be of long duration. In other words, we ourselves, when we take a long view of the vicissitudes lying behind us, have a point of view quite different from what we should have were we living in the distant past, now at some period of disaster, or now at one of renewed hopes.¹ When we look back upon the past we see nowhere a continuous advance, but rather a succession of advances, each with some relatively higher endowments somewhere, and if we at the present day are impressed by the stage we have reached, we are indebted to areas which have reached a certain height and have relapsed and declined (see above, p. 167 *seq.*).

The dead and our difficulties.—Now, where there are relatively complete systems of religious thought the fate of the dead raises problems that have to be taken in hand. Even if we regard it as an entirely speculative enquiry, at all events certain questions can be logically handled. *Either* the individual is annihilated on death *or* he is not, and the normal conviction has been that *something* persists. Next, *either* the sense of continuity which we have in ourselves—our feeling of self-identity—is in some way preserved *or* it is difficult to see how the Self will know that it has survived bodily death. Again, since the consciousness has been developing throughout life, *either* what survives continues to be at the state it was in before death *or* it does not; in other words, *either* those who died 100, or 1000, or 10,000 years ago have remained at the same stage of psychical develop-

¹ Contrast our attitude to 1899–1902 with the varying feelings as the events of the South African War became known to us from day to day.

ment *or* they have undergone some development which we cannot conjecture. Finally, *either* they are quite cut off from our world of perception and conception *or* in some way they are still interested in it. Now it happens that three different but not dissimilar convictions have commonly actuated men : first, the after-life is not entirely different from the present ; second, the individual is not quite cut off from his environment after death ; and third, there is the very wide-spread belief that the dead are directly interested in their descendants or in their former environment. The part these convictions have taken in forms of belief or behaviour does not concern us here, but it is obvious that they realize a very profound interconnexion between the living and the dead which concerns our outlook upon the past. Our whole life is actuated by conscious ideas and subconscious feelings into the validity of which we rarely enquire, and the above convictions entitle us to mention the possibility that the dead have their retrospect as surely as we who are recovering in the course of research a few of the vicissitudes in which they have been directly concerned. They may or they may not be aware of the way in which subsequent ages have profited from the congeries of events which, when we study history sympathetically, must have moved them as surely as similar events move us. But if they are not aware of it, then have we a better knowledge than they. We are so entirely indebted to our predecessors that indifference to them is only equalled by anxiety that posterity should cherish a recollection of ourselves. Our problems are so intimately bound up with past conditions that the past has a certain responsibility for the present, even as we have for the difficulties we are making for the future. It may be deemed a speculative question whether the dead have any interest in the subsequent vicissitudes which perplex us, but, logically, our conception of any current stage cannot

ignore the series of conditions of which that stage is merely a part (cf. p. 77).

Retrospect and expectation. — Our own attitude in retrospect depends upon the stage reached in the development of our consciousness. When we survey the past we see sequences of good or of ill which reach a climax in the present and form a closely-connected whole. Indeed, a sequence of events can appear so appropriate or inevitable that we even regard the development as predetermined—the path seems to have been mapped out from the first—and the more deeply we feel this, the easier to believe that the sequence is not fortuitous. There may be a conviction that a natural destiny has been followed, or that there has been supernatural guidance. This conviction has manifested itself in many different and interesting forms. For example, it has been felt that great men must have had an exceptional childhood, and that their birth must have been attended with unusual circumstances of a supernatural kind. In historical investigation it sometimes becomes clear on independent grounds that the account of the birth and childhood of great heroes has been derived from sources other, later or less trustworthy, than those which deal with the events by which they became famous. In the Old Testament the account of Samuel's childhood is an example of a later tradition which grew up around a famous figure. We are not interested in the childhood of ordinary adults, but when interest is aroused, notice is taken of incidents in childhood which seem appropriate—and the incidents are usually forthcoming. Not only do we thus look for a fitting antecedent to the present, we also associate exceptional behaviour in the child with anticipations of his future. When we find that the evidence and the development supplement each other we naturally ignore the data which would disturb the interconnexion. On the other hand, when we pay

attention to the promise of youth which is not fulfilled, or to the prestige of the adult for which his youth seemed no preparation, we gain a fuller experience. As a rule it would appear that we intuitively compare and see interconnexions, but it is by observation of and reflexion upon the unexpected, the unanticipated, and the disappointment of assumption that thought undergoes development and becomes more capable. Now in dealing with the course of departments of knowledge we noticed that while every individual was evidently working out his own aims, the progress of study led us to consider those who appeared to lie outside the line of advance. They did not vitally impede the study ; it gained a greater fullness from their failure, their extremeness, and their one-sidedness (p. 99). With the rank-and-file, they have enabled the study to reach its present position, they have been necessary to it, and retrospect allows us to realize an indebtedness to them as also to the great names. The value gained has not necessarily been that which they had in view, and we may indulge in the hope that those through whose errors we have profited may be able to see the value of their contribution to progress as surely as we who can look back and estimate their achievements. And so, too, we may trust that those of old who witnessed the downfall of their people may have come to see, even as we can, the gains that have accrued. Admittedly speculative though this may seem, unless they can realize the result at least as clearly as we can, any conception we may have of the Universe must reconsider its attitude to the millions who have died and through whom we have profited.

Subjective and objective development.—Any attitude that sees an interconnexion of events can be shared only by those who hold it ; that of the Christian is naturally not that of the Jew ; that of the man who feels that he has realized his hopes is not that of the man

who has been disappointed and defeated; that of the civilized white is not that of the man of any other race. Personal history is in this way intertwined with the history of the past, and every group has its adherents to whom some particular series of events culminates in their present ideas, beliefs, and convictions. Now, when the individual encounters the inevitable disappointments and troubles he is generally stimulated to rise above them; if he fails in one thing, he is determined to do better next time, and if evil comes, he will by conquering it be the stronger, so that the strength of the temptation becomes his strength. He has in his life-history a series of vicissitudes, and he can turn his losses into gains, profit by his misfortunes, and be the better for his experiences. Such an individual has utilized events which might have caused others to give way to despair, and if his experience has become the richer, among the factors are the circumstances which can, and sometimes do, bring the less fortunate to ruin. Either he overcomes the difficulties, or his thought develops and his new attitude to them makes him view them in another light. He gets the better of his environment or undergoes an adjustment which makes his relationship to it tolerable. If a mountain became a mole-hill, this would be an objective development; but if there is a change in our attitude to the mountain, so that previous difficulties are removed, this development is a subjective and a more important one. If mountains, instead of being removed, become as mole-hills, the development is psychically real and effective. Man often tends to project into the outside world, and give objectivity to, what primarily concerns his own psychical being. The sunshine is brighter and the rain-storm is more earth-refreshing to the happy, and we are so commonly unaware of our own changing attitudes that we fail to perceive that our theories of Reality must be based upon the evidence for our growing

psychical nature. It is because the changing attitude makes all the difference to our view of the past that one cannot know the absolutely real significance of the past until one has gained an attitude ideally complete. In this way, the true meaning of the past is seen to lie in our development in the future.¹

Ideas of the supernatural involved.—Psychical developments may be more or less unconsciously effected ; numerous difficulties are surmounted instinctively or with an effort that gives us a richer experience. But what can be realized by retrospection can also be consciously felt at the time, and the individual recognizes that he has difficulties, that he overcomes them, or that the period of anxiety and reflexion brings a development of his ideas. We often take for granted that energy which impels a man to contend against troubles, or we differentiate between the common and ordinary difficulties and those which are more serious, between the non-religious and the religious attitudes ; although from the psychological point of view there is a general similarity whenever difficulties and disasters oppress the individual. Very frequently among rudimentary peoples on the occasion of drought, defeat, etc., the god, saint, fetish, or whatever embodiment of supernatural power was recognized, has been threatened, ill-treated, or renounced. Belief in the supernatural does not necessarily disappear, new gods are chosen or the earlier ones come back again, and thus there are fluctuations in the cults and ideas of the people. The evidence is so striking that the astonishing thing is that the changes are not more usual in the lower levels where life seems to be more uncertain, and disappoint-

¹ In every retrospect we view only some out of all the data involved ; there must be a " selection," otherwise the past would seem a blur of meaningless and contending elements (cf. p. 150). The ideally perfect retrospect would either be based upon a selection that served the best conceivable aims or it would be able to see in the blur an orderliness which our incomplete views do not represent.

ment and disaster more common. But there appears to be a greater stability in the more rudimentary cults, although the natives have to fight Nature much in the same way as did the prehistoric men who, with inferior experience and tools, laid the first foundations of modern civilization. In spite of the repeated difficulties which they must have encountered there does not seem to be that incoherence and disturbance of belief which we might perhaps have expected.

The persistence of "magic" in spite of failure.

—This is the more noteworthy when we observe the way in which the method of ensuring the means of life is wrapped up with remarkable ideas of the supernatural. There is a very general type of behaviour which is usually called "magical"; savages practise mimetic and other rites, which seem to rest upon the conviction that they can control or influence Nature in order to increase their crops or to secure their prey. They build huts, make weapons, hunt, sow their seed, and gather the fruits of the earth in the usual manner, but the imitative and other rites which they practise as an integral part of their social life seem to point to extraordinary convictions of the influence of their behaviour upon the supernatural powers implicitly or explicitly recognized. So widely distributed are these rites, and they so permeate the higher levels, that for these and other reasons it has been argued that in the history of the evolution of thought a long, long age of "Magic" has preceded the age of "Religion." Now, these rites are apparently employed to influence Nature in a way that we know to be futile. We have found out that we cannot produce sunshine and bring rain, or increase crops by imitative and other practices. But the savage is rational in other respects, or rather he is rational where we are pleased to consider him so; he is irrational where we are aware of our superiority. From his point of view it is obvious that

he is everywhere rational. If then he persists in rites in spite of the fact that expectation must constantly have been defeated, the study of his mental processes and of his body of thought is far more useful than any insistence upon the futility of his ideas from a modern rational point of view. On the theory of "Magic" we must realize that the mind of the savage was such that the rites were held to be valuable. Perhaps the savage did not know when they failed, perhaps his ideas were such that it did not occur to him to change them; in any case we presuppose a mind apparently very different from our own. On the other hand, if the savage, who is in many respects thoroughly rational, persists in futile behaviour, he has some resemblance to the civilized individual who persists in behaviour which his opponent considers futile. Prayer is thoroughly futile in the opinion of some, but it is not so to him who prays, even though his wishes are not granted; and it may be said at once that "Magic" can only be handled psychologically by assuming that the beliefs and practices of the savage formed a whole as satisfactory to him as those of any of our "irrational" opponents are to them. On this view, then, the "magical" rites persist, not for any reasons connected with the bare rites themselves, but rather on account of the feelings, convictions, and desires—however rudimentary—which primarily accompanied them.

The stability and development of religion.—On higher levels convictions of the supernatural order have been shaken by the unexpected and the unanticipated; this can be seen, for example, in the history of Hebrew religion. But the very disasters that could destroy the convictions have sometimes given them a newer and greater force. The conviction of a close relationship with a beneficent and supernatural power has suffered a severe blow, but the vicissitudes which appeared to destroy the relationship have forced a development of thought

which turned loss into gain, evil into good, and have given a powerful impetus and a new meaning to the old convictions. On the lower levels where the mind is such that it is often difficult to interpret it, thought seems to be more stable. Progress does not appear to consist of incessant fluctuation or of a zigzag movement, but is rather the result of a more orderly process. It has grown up, not out of the ruins of preceding bodies of thought, but, rather, as also in research, by successive advances each indebted to the preceding, though not reproducing the predecessor. A stage has profited from the failure of its predecessor, and the process that turns disadvantages into advantages obliges us to find room in our conceptions for those whose loss has been our gain. The mind may surmount its difficulties instinctively or with due deliberation ; but when ideas of the supernatural are evoked these cannot remain precisely as they had been before. In the higher religions the development has had striking effects, but here, as also in the rudimentary cults, disaster and defeat of expectation have not necessarily brought annihilation of the beliefs. In the higher religions, if there is no dislocation, there is a profound advance in the strengthening and reshaping of earlier beliefs, as illustrated in the Old Testament. In the lower levels there is evidence enough for disturbance of beliefs, although supernatural ideas do not seem to be relinquished ; but there is a surprising consistency and stability. It is true that these levels are so remote from ours that we can only interpret them from our point of view ; there is a thought which it is as difficult to comprehend as that of the child. But we deal with adults with adult activities who obviously have an intellectual experience superior to that of the child. Consequently the problem of their attitude to change is instructive, because, although disturbance of belief does occur, it is relatively exceptional, and this though the beliefs are involved with remarkable

and so-called "magical" rites the inefficacy of which would have been evident almost at once. That the rites ever persisted can only be due in the first instance to a consciousness which was able to adjust failure and disaster with its total experience. Was it not Voltaire who said that arsenic and incantation will kill a sheep? But the student of religions has to ask himself why men began to use the "incantation" and to persist in it; he has to ask why they ever began to employ rites involving supernatural ideas in order to obtain the wherewithal to live, and why they maintained such ideas in spite of failure of food and innumerable other difficulties. And if we are to regard these men as not inferior to those who laid the first foundations of our civilization, and as men and not anthropoid apes, we must infer that they differ in degree but not in kind from those who in more civilized lands maintain supernatural beliefs in spite of disappointment and disasters. The closer investigation of this involves that of the forms in which the beliefs are clothed; the error is to judge from externals and to fail to see what lies underneath these outward forms.

Summary.—The fact remains that thought seems to be more easily disturbed in the higher levels than in the lower. The possibility of fluctuation is greater and there are more individuals whose attitudes sever them from their fellows in one or more respects. If retrospect will allow the conviction that the development from the past to the present is perfectly natural, the attitude is incomplete if it finds no place for those who cannot share it or if it confines itself to the past. If it is natural, predestined, or supernaturally guided up to the present, it should be so henceforth. The line of vicissitudes culminating in the civilization and culture of the whites seems so clear that we could no more conceive it going on and culminating elsewhere than the Romans could

have conceived into what the barbarians of Western Europe would evolve. But a larger view of the past shows that what we gain from retrospect does not guarantee a continuation—the present conditions are the resultant complex of steps in which the purposes of innumerable individuals have been constantly subordinated. We gain valuable results when we see interconnexions, but results as, or more, valuable have been gained when the anticipated sequence has been broken. Here it is the absence of connexion which stimulates us. Once again, we cannot fail to note that those who have made for change or movement, while working each along his own lines, have worked in a larger environment where every individualistic effort is adjusted to a purpose which could not be anticipated. The individual in his development moves immeasurably quicker than the environment, and when his own convictions are intense he may be impatient of the gap between himself and others, and he may tend to repress in others an individuality which in his case has brought him to his present stage. That which we may call the common consciousness has its claims and cannot always assimilate what is offered to it. The larger environment—the people—has its own laws, the common consciousness represents a profounder actively-working force; the relationship between it and the one or the few who are making for change determines the course of history, but when we say that “the Voice of the People is the Voice of God” we are influenced by the evidence that agrees with our ideas. That attitude is incomplete which finds no place for the exceptions.

CHAPTER IX

DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUITY

I

The Prophets of the Old Testament.—In the preceding pages we have considered some processes in change, some phases of the attitudes towards change, and some forms of development in the individual's body of thought and in that of the group to which he belongs. The student of religions can view the religions separately, as separate "individuals" as it were, but the phenomena involved cannot be kept apart from their context; they are bound up with other psychical data, they involve other aspects of thought, even as our attitude to a religion is bound up with our whole body of thought, or as every individual himself is only a part of some greater whole. Discussions of religion sometimes ignore the way in which every religion is bound up with the contemporary culture and civilization. It is of course true that for purposes of closer observation we arrest, separate, and analyse our data as though they were stationary objects, but the dynamic point of view regards phenomena that develop as living and developing things, and as things primarily part of some larger interconnexion. In proceeding to a further consideration of the relation between the environment and the more distinctive or progressive individuals, we may seize as a telling example the prophets of the Old

Testament, and we shall endeavour to determine what can be learned from their place in the development of Palestinian religion, a religion which directly concerns Judaism and Christianity and modern civilization.

Specialistic aspects of their significance.—The modern study of Old Testament prophetic literature has brought out in a way that had not previously been realized the spirit of the Hebrew prophets and their significance for the development of thought leading up to the rise of Christianity. This is perhaps one of the most notable achievements of Biblical research, and one may contrast the modern more historical method of investigation with the earlier well-known tendencies to lay stress upon the prophets mainly as diviners, seers, and foretellers of the future.¹ Such tendencies, however, are extremely instructive in that they reflect the desire to find links of connexion between different stages of history, or to see miracles and wonders as the essential indications of religious truth; but they tended to ignore or, at least, to obscure other aspects of the activity of these great figures. It is noteworthy, also, that in recent times there has been a certain tendency to regard the prophets more particularly as social reformers. It is conceivable that this is somewhat subconsciously influenced by modern conditions and thought, much in the same way as the study of eschatological ideas—the ideas of the last things and of new ages—is symptomatic of the psychological unrest of to-day. However, we shall fail to understand the Hebrew prophets if we regard them merely as social reformers, since while *we* of to-day may perhaps easily sever social from religious reforms;

¹ The prophet of old is regarded now as a "forth-teller" rather than as a "fore-teller." In either case, however, the future is involved, but the stress would now be laid upon his message and his contribution to history rather than upon the question whether future events were correctly anticipated by him. The older view had some right on its side, but it had a far too narrow conception of history.

in their age, as so frequently elsewhere, social and religious or civic and spiritual matters were more closely inter-related. In point of fact, the features in the prophets that are most permanent combine political, social, and spiritual elements inextricably, and to regard them merely or mainly as social reformers is as imperfect an attitude as that old-fashioned one which laid greatest emphasis upon their abilities as foretellers of the future.¹ Society formed a whole, and they went to the root of the evil and inculcated ideas which applied to all classes and would promote that sympathy and kindness which the most well-meaning and pertinacious of reformers cannot necessarily kindle. In Oriental societies, and indeed elsewhere, where the legislative and other ideals are for the group as a whole, it is the individual who suffers ; and it would seem that while the prophets leave untouched the institutions that regulate the group at large, they look to a new spirit of benevolence and sympathy to relieve the hard cases which hit the individual. Obviously, if institutions are shaped to cover all likely cases they tend to become stereotyped and incapable of evolution, and what the prophets implicitly did was to leave the institutions but to inspire all who lived under them with a new spirit. The prophets, in other words, found the only solution of the problem of reconciling the individual and society, and of doing justice to individual rights and wrongs.

¹ Robertson Smith, one of the most prominent workers in the modern study of Hebrew prophecy, well pointed out that the prophets have no new theories of government ; they propose no practical scheme of political readjustment, their business is not to govern but to teach. " Their cry is not for better institutions but for better men." Their work is essentially religious, and the only remedy they see is a repentance and return of all classes of society to Yahweh (*Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed. pp. 348, 350 seq.). It is not to be forgotten that we have not all their utterances ; doubtless we have only the best and finest. To compare them with any other figures whose good, bad, and indifferent sayings are alike preserved is unmethodical. This also cloaks the fact that, like all zealous individualists, they are not wholly fair to the conditions and classes against which they inveigh.

The individual.—It is, of course, impossible to summarize in a few words the fundamentals of the teaching of these figures and their school. Two points only need be especially noticed. The first is the development of the idea of individuality, an extremely significant feature when we consider the general tendency—and especially by men of strong individuality themselves—to treat the individual as merely part of a group or class. Individuality has been the main factor in change, and the problem of the individual is a perennial one. In the study of any religion it is always necessary to consider what it does for the individual. Is he so swallowed up in the group that he has no individuality of his own, and is his relationship with the supernatural dependent entirely upon his place in the group? Sometimes the group seems to feel as a whole the merits or the demerits of one of their body—there is a collective enjoyment of the good deeds of one, a collective fear of danger on account of the bad deeds of another. This solidarity is an extremely important feature, especially when the supernatural and social ideas form a single body of thought. It has obvious excellences, but it tends to sap independence and all idea of responsibility, in that the corporate spirit languishes as the individuals tend to rely entirely upon others. And especially in more complex societies is the position of the individual instructive, because, where the supernatural ideas are bound up with the group as a whole, there is a tendency for them to be more closely associated with a few representative individuals, and the ordinary individual with his own very personal though very real difficulties is often compelled to resort to an outlet which is repudiated by the representative thought. In this way we may get “survivals,” and some aspects of “Magic” that are inimical to the general welfare of the community. The problem of the individual and the group is a very real one, and it would appear to begin at relatively low levels where

the individual either has his own personal supernatural guardian or shares that of the group.¹ Everywhere the problem is bound up with a consideration of the existing social conditions, and Hebrew religion is no exception. The problem of individualism is treated by the prophets in a way that shows that religious and social questions were involved, and one of the most significant features in Hebrew prophecy is the insistence upon the rights and the responsibilities of every individual.

His immediate relationship with God.—Next, taking up the current thought of their time, the prophets proclaim the sole sovereignty of the national God Yahweh, His power in the world, His deeds for men and His claims upon them. Not merely the group as a whole, single individuals also were concerned; Yahweh's relationship with His people was with each one of them, and each one could have direct communion with Him. It is characteristic of significant religious reforms that they tend to bring God and man into an immediate relationship. Moreover, the relationship has its consequences. The superiority felt by the people in consequence of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel was not enough. A profound development in thought appears when it is insisted that this entailed a greater responsibility. The message of Yahweh is given in the well-known words of Amos, a shepherd of Tekoa: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities" (iii. 2). Expressed in the thought of the age these words mean that Israel's recognition of exceptional favour implied a higher standard by which it would be judged. The idea is at once seen to be true—the self-consciousness of any superiority brings heavier responsibility. It is otherwise expressed in the

¹ For examples of "individual totems" and "guardian spirits" reference should be made to Sir J. G. Frazer's great work, *Totemism and Exogamy* (see the Index).

phrase *noblesse oblige*, and in the modern recognition that privilege entails responsibility. The psychological truth is restated by Amos on the religious plane, and conversely the religious truths of any age that reappear and persist will have an underlying form that can perhaps be stated in less distinctively religious terms. The secret of the truth lies in the self-consciousness of a superiority. It is not that superiority is attributed by others, it is consciously felt or claimed ; and this difference between any attribute and the consciousness of it is always significant. Every development of which the Self is conscious involves a higher standard, and it is a mark of decadence to ignore or relinquish ideas or ideals the value of which had once been recognized.¹

The prophets and Judaism.—Now when we leave the earnest, vigorous, and uncompromising utterances of the Hebrew prophets and direct our attention to early orthodox Judaism we are in a new world. Religion seems formal, ceremonial, and ritualistic ; it appears to be without life and spontaneity, and from one point of view we feel that we have experienced a decline. This feeling is more vividly realized when, in the light of modern criticism, we assign the Mosaic legislation, and certain books or portions of books to the post-exilic age, after the days of the great prophets.² It is this variation in spirit, this new world, which stimulates the work of criticism in its attempt to place all the data in an historical frame.³

¹ Cp. the analogy in historical research, p. 244.

² It is not to be supposed that they were first *written* in that age ; some portions are earlier, but considerable portions are post-exilic in their present form, and they represent the varied traditions and forms of thought as preserved or as current at a time subsequent to the activity of the great prophets.

³ As a classical statement some famous words of Wellhausen may be cited : " My enjoyment of [the historical and prophetic books] was marred by the Law . . . even where there were points of contact between it and them, differences also made themselves felt, and I found it impossible to give a candid decision in favour of the priority of the

This variation is recognized to a greater or less degree by all Old Testament scholars. For example, Mr. C. G. Montefiore, one of the leaders of modern liberal Judaism, in his *Hibbert Lectures* of 1892, points out the distinctive features of the sources in the Priestly Law.¹ He notes (p. 320) : " There is certainly a fusion in their conception of God between old heathen notions and prophetic ideas : this fusion is characteristic of the entire Priestly Law." Some of the late rites and ceremonies " embody superstitious ideas of extremest antiquity, and are strangely pagan in their very form and enactment, yet out of all the heathen sting is removed through their adoption and promulgation by Yahweh. That marriage of heathen practice to monotheistic use is one of the oddest and saddest features of the whole Priestly Code " (p. 322). The excessive ceremonialism against which the prophets contended reappears, and in place of the spontaneous intercourse with a universal Deity, the Deity becomes more remote, and there are remarkable practices to avoid heedless contact with holy things, an idea which belongs to the widespread concept of Tabu. Access to the Deity is safeguarded by intricate ceremonial. He is regarded as being localized in the midst of His people, but He is surrounded by an *entourage* of priests. As Mr. Montefiore remarks, this localization " carried with it grave risks of materialism. It gave a new lease of life to the old heathen idea that a man could be nearer to God in one place than in another " (p. 324). It struck at the prophetic teaching of the accessibility and universal sovereignty of God, and as a consequence gave the notion that one class might be nearer to the Deity than another. Further, it en-

Law. *Dimly I began to perceive* that throughout there was between them all the difference that separates two wholly distinct worlds " (*Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, Eng. trans., 1885, p. 3).

¹ That is, those legalistic portions of the Pentateuch ascribed in their present form to the post-exilic age.

couraged the people to find external mediators or intercessors, for, as we noticed when discussing survivals, if the environment finds the ideas offered it inadequate, it will insist upon an outlet for its feelings in some other way which may be antagonistic to the earlier reformers or to current orthodox opinion (cf. p. 181).

Retrogression = adjustment.—Not to mention other features, we may now see that if, from one point of view, there is a deterioration or retrogression from the teaching of the prophets to orthodox Judaism, we also have an adjustment between the reforming figures and their teaching on the one side, and the environment and its religion on the other. The old religion is really brought into a new stage through the influence of the prophets. And, as a result, Judaism survived. It bound together and inspired its adherents, it allowed room for a certain amount of individual religion, and it was capable of undergoing some development. The history of the Maccabees is a stirring illustration of what the religion did for the people; and no people, more than the Jews, preserved their identity through their religion. The facts are aptly and incisively summarized by Wellhausen, who passes from a summary of the externalization which, like a shell, preserved the kernel of prophetic teaching, to the following reasoned statement: "It was a necessity that Judaism should incrust itself in this manner, without those hard and ossified forms the preservation of its essential elements would have proved impossible. At a time when all nationalities, and at the same time all bonds of religion and national customs, were beginning to be broken up in the seeming cosmos and real chaos of the Graeco-Roman empire, the Jews stood out like a rock in the midst of the ocean. When the natural conditions of independent nationality all failed them, they nevertheless artificially maintained it with an energy truly marvellous, and thereby preserved for themselves, and at the same

time for the whole world, an eternal good." ¹ Had it not been for the existence of an organic systematized religion, we should not have had an Old Testament—the Jews would not have been able to withstand Hellenism, and their writings would not have been treasured and preserved. Whatever impression we have when we contrast the prophets with the Mosaic legislation, the fact remains that a legalistic and formal religion with many so-called "semi-heathen" features formed the prelude to Christianity. But here at this later period once more we have on the one side the Teacher and his earliest followers, and on the other, the growth of Christianity as a systematized religion, presenting, as does Judaism, numerous features which are strangely "heathenish." ²

The application of new teaching.—Thus we have to distinguish between teaching, principles, aims or ideals, and the modification that ensues when there has been adjustment. A simple analogy is afforded by the difference between legislation as first proposed by the relatively few and its shape when it is presented to Parliament, when it has been able to profit by the criticism of the Opposition, or when, after it has become an Act of Parliament and has been put into operation, it undergoes further modification in order to adjust it more satisfactorily to the environment. In general, any teaching for the benefit of an environment must necessarily be shaped so that it is applicable to the life and thought of the community; that is to say, it is adjusted to more interests than those of the reformers who are, in a sense, the specialists. That which is new must be fitted into a context in harmony with current life and thought, and how inevitable this is, is apparent when we consider the history of the introduction or modification of all religious

¹ *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, p. 497 seq.; quoted also in *Ency. Brit.*, ed. xi., art. "Jews," vol. xv. p. 390 seq. § 23.

² On the question of "originality" in thought see below, pp. 316 seq.

and other teaching. The legal principles and legislation of a civilized state may be immensely superior to the customary law in uncivilized areas, but experience has shown that the whole cannot be imposed upon natives *en bloc*; a certain amount of compromise is necessary if the natives are to be raised to a higher level and to retain that initiative which will make them realize their responsibilities. So also missionary enterprise in ancient and modern times has been successful when a certain adjustment has been effected between the new and the old; and in the spread of Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Buddhism, one will frequently find numerous local and other differences, of greater or less significance, due to the mutual adjustment between the old environment and the new ideas. Consequently, there are significant developments in the indigenous or native material: in the Old Testament, for example, popular stories have now a monotheistic shape or a more spiritual colouring which once they did not possess, while in Europe earlier "pagan" material has received certain adjustments in order to make it conform in some degree to Christianity. The old and the new coalesce, and hence in one place we may discover under the veneer of Mohammedanism forms of cult strictly alien from the religion itself, and in another, under the aegis of a Christian or christianized saint, are features indubitably of non-Christian ancestry. At Cocullo in the Abruzzi Mountains of Italy, St. Domenico, who is said to have flourished in the tenth century, has an annual festival when serpents are carried before his image, which in its turn is hung with these reptiles. The shrine is famous for its cures, and although the cult as a whole is doubtless a much modified form of what once prevailed, it is clearly of non-Christian origin. But the remarkable fact is that we are here on the border of the ancient pre-Christian Marsi who claimed to be able to cure snake-bite, and that the goddess Angitia, near the

modern village of Luco, was a goddess of healing especially renowned for the same skill.¹ It is obvious that the old tradition has persisted from pre-Christian times, although it is now associated with Christian usage ; and many other examples could be given of " survivals " due to the compromise between the old and the new.

The education of the environment.—It has sometimes seemed a reproach to religion that adjustments and compromises of this sort should occur, but this is to forget that compromise and readjustment invariably occur both when social and legislative reforms are applied to an environment, and in the education of children. If we desire to influence another level, we know from experience that to impose our system in its entirety is to court failure. There must needs be some adjustment, some concession on our part, and since this allows us to gain a better understanding of a level other than our own, we are widening ours and thus contributing to our own psychical development. Consequently, the features in Judaism, Christianity, and other religions which from one point of view represent a decline are, from the point of view of the environment, the result of successful assimilation and adjustment. In the Hebrew prophets, and in all those who inaugurate changes in the history of thought, we have the more specialistic offshoots, whereas in Judaism and in other systems (Paulinism and Christianity, Mohammedanism, etc.) we look for the more systematic bodies of thought which aim at adjusting the special aspects of the teaching of the few to the daily life and common thought of the many. Thus, the Hebrew prophets and Judaism are not commensurable ; and in this and analogous cases we should not compare individualistic particulars with what is more comprehensive and systematic, and belongs to the environment as a whole. On

¹ See *Ency. Brit.*, 11th ed., vol. xvii. p. 774 (art. " Marsi "), vol. xxiv. p. 681 (" Serpent-worship," § 15).

the other hand, Judaism could very properly be compared with the earlier systematic body of religious thought before the period of the prophets' influence; but this earlier stage is lost.¹

The development of the whole.—The adjustment made by the environment virtually represents its own growth in contrast to any forceful imposition upon it of another body of thought. So in other types of influence: in education we recognize the vital importance of assisting the child to work out its own development, and this is what the environment does in the long run, even though we may look at medieval Palestine and other Bible-lands and call it retrogression. The result may seem to us a poor thing, but it is its own. The environment can be guided, and those who are the guides must have the strongest faith in their own convictions and an intelligent sympathy for their field. There are boys' guilds in the United States established for the inculcation of Christian principles, and in order to reach the boys and appeal to their interests, the constitution, ritual, and whole rationale are along lines familiar to readers of James Fenimore Cooper. The boy's love of adventure in the Wild West is shaped along the elements of Christianity, and the scheme is said to be very successful and to appeal to those to whom the Sunday School offers no attractions. The principle may also be illustrated from a recent work which points out that the essential difference between St. Paul's missionary methods and ours lies in the fact that he seems

¹ There are three forms of adjustment—reshaping or rewriting, addition, and excision. There are three groups of phenomena—the evidence (*a*) as it is presented to us, the presumed earlier or original form (*b*), and the nature of the influence and adjustment (*c*). From *a* we cannot reconstruct *b*; nor do *b* and *c* necessarily give us *a* as it now is. Psychological processes cannot be so easily traced. But the formula $a = b + c$ is useful, though properly $a = B + C$, where *B* is the present form of *b*, and *C* is not necessarily an unmodified *c*. For example, an amended Act now presents (1) the original in *a* modified form, and (2) the effect of the suggested changes so far as they have been embodied.

to have encouraged the communities he founded to be independent, to act on their own initiative, and so to exercise their own responsibility. The apostle appears to have assisted each environment to adjust his own teaching to itself, to have recognized and accepted what was not contrary to the spirit of his teaching, and to have implanted that spirit in such a way that religious "colonies," as it were, speedily grew up.¹ Two observations may be made. First, the consequence of this is that to a casual observer the resemblance between the Christian and the earlier pre-Christian stages in the environment would be extremely close, and only closer inspection would show wherein the real difference lay. In the second place, although we are considering the attitude of one intelligence to another, we are also understanding something of the relation between ourselves and an Intelligence superior to our own; for all that can be ascertained concerning psychical processes, and the influence of mind upon mind is essentially significant for conceptions of a Divine Mind.

The reality of the advance.—The relationship between the successive stages before and after the inauguration of a new development deserves careful notice. Since in the nature of the case any development in the environment is that of the individuals, it is from the individual we must start. And the important feature to notice is the genetic interconnexion throughout all the successive stages. The man who in his life-experience suddenly gains new and strong convictions, powerfully influencing his activities, has made a distinct advance, but there is no psychical break in the whole. No hard-and-fast line severs the before and after, and even in the

¹ *Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours* (1912), by the Rev. R. A. Allen, with an Introduction by the Bishop of Madras. (The above sentences are based upon the *Review of Theology and Philosophy*, July 1912, pp. 29-32.)

occurrence of the phenomenon known as conversion, the profoundest change that men have experienced, the genetic interconnexion is not broken. A man may feel himself a new being, he may have the feeling of a new birth—a not uncommon feature—his whole outlook may be totally different, but he has behind him his earlier development. He has his old stock of knowledge, habits, and experience; and if he sees in a way that he never did before, one consciousness is not changed for another, but something new colours, reshapes, and controls the manifold data which previously belonged to his consciousness. As when a new stage comes in research, there is no genetic break, there are newer principles, views, outlooks, and attitudes which enable a man to grasp things in a new way, but there is no lack of connecting links between the old and the new. In both there is a new spirit, and it is the spirit of the individual and the spirit of research, scarcely definable, but well understood, which marks the result of the change. The change is essentially psychical and spiritual; there is a new and a larger apprehension of the environment in which one's activities are placed. It is a new momentum, as it were, carrying on the old, but in a new form. And so, too, when we turn to the new stage in an environment, while we can see much in common between the earlier and the later stages, this must not blind us to that which gives the old a new spirit, a new total expression, a fresh impetus, a change which may perhaps be likened unto the appearance of a new stage in the history of organic evolution. The biological comparison seems most expressive, for the movement of thought and that of life are most closely interconnected, and research in each may be usefully stimulated by analogies in the other.

Unwillingness to allow difference or resemblance.

—There are two errors to avoid. First, superficial examination may persuade us that there is no difference.

This is the great mistake of the comparative method when it compares data apart from their contexts. If we were unskilled and without sufficient data we might see no difference between the representatives of two successive stages in organic evolution, or between, say, the skull of an ape and that of a primitive man. See them as living creatures and observe how they work, and we realize that the legitimacy of our conclusions rests upon the discovery of crucial tests. In comparing any expressions of thought we may find parallels or identities, but the endeavour must be made to see them in their contexts and in their dynamic aspects. In both Judaism and Christianity it has been possible to exaggerate the relationship or ignore the difference between two stages. The old orthodox and traditional view of post-exilic Judaism practically identifies it with the entire Mosaic legislation, and thus minimizes the prominence of the Hebrew prophets and the profound character of the development for which they were responsible. On the other hand, the relationship between Christianity and the religions or cults to which an indebtedness can be traced, has been exaggerated for reasons that were certainly not for the promotion of orthodoxy! At all events, in the comparison of religions the distinctiveness of Christianity has frequently been minimized or ignored simply through a too mechanical comparison of features evidently or apparently identical. As regards Christianity, the orthodox view itself inclines to the other extreme when it resents the investigation of the presence of or the similarity with features of alien origin. It thus tends to insist upon the absolute originality of the religion. This is the second error; it finds every difference between the things compared. Now, there is one danger in particular when resentment is felt at the comparison of religions. If we take a number of them, A, B, C, D, we may be inclined to resent the points of contact which A is said to find in the rest, because we

adhere to A, and, perhaps, even regard the others as "untrue" or "erroneous." We may have no objection to attacks upon B, C, and D, because we are convinced of the superiority of A; and indeed some will defend A by condemning B, C, and D.¹ On the anti-religious standpoint all religions are alike, and the faults found in B, C, and D are also found in A. Consequently, those who have explicitly defended A by an uncompromising criticism of the rest, have employed a method which this more detached standpoint has used against them. If we turn to the standpoint of research, once more all religions are viewed alike, for purposes of a purely impartial enquiry, which, however, is not anti-religious; but should this enquiry justify the view that A has the superiority, it will be the result of a criticism which the adherents of A might resent, but one which will go behind and remove the objections that could be persistently brought against A by those who hold the anti-religious standpoint. The anti-religious enquiry seeks for truth, but the true critical method, though it seems more compromising, ultimately does more justice to all the evidence involved.

The question of originality.—Moreover, the superiority which enables us to condemn all religions, or all religions except one, is an attitude which implicitly recognizes an intellectual or a religious privilege; and what the shepherd of Tekoa had to tell the Hebrews, or what we meant by the phrase *noblesse obligè*, is the relation between self-consciousness and responsibility (p. 305 *seq.*, above). Now, if the originality which has been claimed for Christianity disappears by the comparative method, it is something which it never had. But if, none the less, there is a conviction that it still retains an

¹ So, some will throw over the Old Testament and make no concessions touching the New. Others again reject Chronicles as a source and whole-heartedly accept the trustworthiness of the books of Kings. But this type of error is by no means confined to religion, theology, or Biblical criticism.

originality, it may be that, as has often been the case, we have been misled by our definitions. If development forces us to investigate our definitions and justify our convictions, it makes for the progress of thought, and it compels us to find a way of restating our values in newer terms. The vicissitudes of experience—history in the widest sense—and the definitions of our terms are inter-related. The second error, then, is to assume or expect an entire originality in a new stage of development. In the course of his own development the individual is often prone to see at some stage a conspicuous originality in his life or thought. Certain phenomena make so vivid an impression upon him and are so keenly realized, that the new stage in him encourages the feeling that there is an objective newness. The relationship between him and them is so intense that he feels them in a way he had never experienced before, and he is apt to believe that he is the first to discover them. In research, men have gained the conviction that the discovery which so powerfully affected them had never before been made, and no doubt the novel element has a context with them that it has nowhere else. Also in social reform, reformers would sometimes seem to believe that they are the first to awake to the existence of evils which they would remove ; and no doubt the place the impressions have in their consciousness is different from that which it has in other men. Thus what seems objectively new may be partly or wholly a subjective advance, a new stage in the development of the individual, and the originality will lie in the relation between him and the external data.¹ By common consent

¹ Says Sir Joshua Reynolds in one of his papers : " A student unacquainted with the attempts of former adventurers is always apt to overrate his own abilities ; to mistake the most trifling excursions for discoveries of moment, and every coast new to him for a new found country. If by chance he passes beyond his usual limits he congratulates his own arrival at those regions which those who have steered a better course have long left behind them." The homely truth is repeated also by George Lewes (*The Principles of Success in Literature*,

we estimate originality from our body of thought. The great men who rank as original are not removed from our horizon, they are akin to us but above us, and not outside our grasp. Those who are far outside the body of thought of their environment may be original and powerful men of genius, but they will not be regarded as such—it may be left for some later age to perceive their value. If we are to look anywhere for originality it must be of a sort that is sufficiently in touch with our ideas that we can recognize it. Originality is not merely freakish.¹ Indeed, to a certain extent, we see originality in things we should have liked to do or say ourselves! It concerns wholes rather than parts, and where we recognize it in men, often we can hardly lay our finger on some well-defined spot and say, this is originality.

Originality concerns the whole.—What is original is rather something animating the whole, and though we could by analysis show the source of practically every element, we should still recognize that the value lay not in the several parts but in the whole—that is to say, in the man himself. There is something *personally* effective in it. We may, for example, see the genesis of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*,² we may hear from Robert Louis Stevenson himself of the factors that went to make up his famous *Treasure Island*;³ but what is original is that

the Scott Library, p. 19): "Generally it may be remarked that the pride which follows the sudden emancipation of the mind from ignorance of any subject, is accompanied by a feeling that all the world must be in the state of darkness from which we have ourselves emerged. It is the knowledge learned yesterday which is most freely imparted to-day." It is appropriate to recall that "freedom of thought" is not the same as "freedom of utterance," and that a responsibility attaches to the latter. See above, p. 27.

¹ Brown, in Jerome K. Jerome's *Novel Notes*, wanted an ugly heroine: "Brown's chief ambition in life is to be original, and his method of obtaining the original is to take the unoriginal and turn it upside down. . . . There are many other people besides Brown whose notions of originality would seem to be precisely similar."

² A. Ainger, *Lectures and Essays*, ii. 75 seq.

³ *Essays in the Art of Writing* (1905), pp. III seq.

indefinable something which made Coleridge and Stevenson what they were. The plays of Shakespeare are or are not original—everything depends on the point of view, and the more uncompromisingly and drastically the analytical and comparative method could strip him and other men of originality, the more profound becomes our conception of what originality really is. Our idea of it is purified, intensified, and heightened by the very fact that it cannot be found in particulars. Thus the search ends by revealing something more fundamental than those externalities which first attracted attention. We are brought to recognize an originality which takes up current material, gives it a fresh movement, forms new ideas—or rather lends old ideas a new appeal. It is a creating, but not out of nothing. It is a deeper and a wider vision, and the difference between the raw material and the shape it now takes is that which is effective originality. But the process is a normal one whenever there are new stages in the development of our thought, it seems to be always active; and when we are impressed, it is by results which strike our attention and appeal to us more vividly and intensely than others. The process throughout differs in degree, not in kind. The genius is also a man, and he is understood by his fellow-men; the difference lies in those subtler things which sever him from us. The process which takes up the old, reshapes it, and revitalizes it, is most marked when our minds are impressed by differences; the inconspicuous and normal examples are only apparent on close inspection. The process takes us away from mechanical ideas; no mechanism can consciously and unconsciously select its threads and weave the new web. Chemical transmutation does not help us to comprehend the alchemy which works for purposes not wholly its own, and which produces combinations untrammelled by known laws. It can only be described in terms of something that lives, and may be likened to the difference

between stages in organic evolution. The elusive process may be suggestive of mysticism—a term which means different things to different people, unless they are mystics themselves—but those who are the most materialistic have undergone a development no less mysterious. There are these processes which cannot be grasped by any mechanical or inorganic symbolism; and if they lie outside the domain of scientific enquiry, no scientific explanation of them can ever be offered. If, on the other hand, they are material for science, any explanation must be in harmony with all relevant lines of enquiry. Specialistic enquiry in every detached field, even that of religious experience, has its right to be heard, and only with the convergence of the varied departments of knowledge could an adequate explanation be expected. Deep-probing though the investigations of modern research may be, this spiritual and psychical process is still a secret of the Universe.

The question of influence.—The question of originality involves that of influence. In dealing with religions it has sometimes seemed easy to infer that there has been crude borrowing, artificial imposition, or some deep and powerful influence. Now, all questions of psychical interrelation are difficult to handle because of the way in which individuals appear to be *unconsciously* or *subconsciously* influenced by that which falls within their horizon. Often a writer is supposed to be influenced by another, although he may be perfectly unconscious of any influence or indeed ignorant of the source alleged. Especially at periods of change, when new ideas appear to be in the air, and a certain similarity of thought manifests itself, we often refer vaguely to “the spirit of the age,” or we believe that some mutual indebtedness must exist. What is more particularly to be noticed, is the level of the individual who appears to have been influenced. We may ask whether we are not in any case to presuppose

a readiness to be influenced, and whether what we see may not have been transmuted by the man himself.¹ In the general spread of ideas (Liberty, Democracy, etc.) it is not difficult to perceive that individuals interpret them from their own point of view, and that the ideas mean nothing to them until they have reached a certain age where they can assimilate them. The fact that people will often differ widely touching the same "object" (*e.g.* Democracy or Religion) emphasizes the importance of not confusing what an individual may have gained from the world about him and what it means for him himself. It is safe to say that people who are "influenced" by ideas of socialism would not agree in endorsing the same statement of what it meant for them. Those to whom ideas of evolution appeal will differ in such a way that we can (for purposes of analysis) distinguish the "object" that influences from the various individual aspects which will represent individual contributions to the history of the idea. Looking at the subject anew, we may distinguish, therefore, between a genuine influence that does not exclude originality and an influence that virtually leads to unmistakable imitation. Now, in literature there is a difference between originality of style and euphuism; although it must be admitted that what was really a genuine form of expression has sometimes been treated as unreal, affected, and artificial. But it is impossible to continue affecting what is not felt, and the test in the long run is that of appeal. In letters and art euphuism and artificiality are not persisting, neither the imitators nor the public are influenced for long, and the work does not stand the test of time. The man who unambiguously manifests the influence of some master may appear to be an imitator; but if we feel he is also

¹ We may compare the process mentioned above, p. 312, n. 1; what we see (*a*) has been influenced (*c*), but there remains the question of the earlier stage (*b*).

an interpreter, if we recognize that we have his own contribution, no suggestion of affectation, imitation, or artificiality will abide. And in this case the source, too, increases in value because of him who has been influenced by it, just as, for example, the master gains more lustre through his pupils, and the Bible has increased in objective value on account of the millions whom it has influenced.

Babylonian influence on the Old Testament.—

When comparison and a survey of the historical circumstances suggest that some influence has been at work, it is always necessary to consider the depth of the influence and to distinguish influence from imposition and imitation. In the critical study of religions the evidence adduced for influences is always important, but the inferences based thereon need careful observation. For an illustration reference may be made to the recent tendency to exaggerate the character of Babylonian influence upon Palestine and the Old Testament. The historical connexions between the two areas are undisputed, and the Old Testament contains features which, in some cases certainly, and in others probably, were derived from Babylonia, and there are many which are identical or analogous to those found in Babylonian literature. It is much simpler to agree that Palestine was saturated with Babylonian influence than to discriminate between the certain, the probable, and the possible cases of influence. Likewise, it is much easier to suppose that a man is influenced by Kant or Spencer than to examine both the resemblances and the differences. We usually desire simple conclusions, although in both research and life the data often became too complicated for simple hypotheses. At all events, when Babylonian influence is over-estimated, as it has been, we find ourselves confronted by four grave difficulties. (a) We have to explain the absence of traces of influence where they might be expected and the presence of features which negative

the influence. (b) The same method of comparison would prove that Palestine was evidently influenced very powerfully by Egypt, South Arabia, the Aegean (Crete), and probably also by Asia Minor. (c) The readiness with which Palestine in the Middle Ages threw off the effects of Hellenistic and Roman influence does not make it likely that Babylonian influence would necessarily be lasting. Finally, (d) the more we are obliged to recognize Palestine's apparent indebtedness to this or the other influence the more do we appear to deny it any native thought.¹ On the other hand, a truer estimate finds a very similar body of thought in the old Oriental area, and while it recognizes a certain foreign colouring, and certain indications of specific Babylonian and other influences, it seeks to find a means of satisfying the four points mentioned. It notices the relationship between any modern civilization and its influence upon another civilization or upon a less civilized area, and infers that even though it be an exaggeration to suppose that Palestine must have been deeply influenced by Babylonia, there were psychical conditions sufficiently akin to those in Babylonia to admit influence from that quarter. The theory in its exaggerated form virtually robs Palestine of any independent thought; the more discriminating estimate avoids the objections to it and gains a preliminary idea of conditions in Palestinian thought which a critical study of the Old Testament confirms.

Influence and development.—On the same analogy, either Mr. John Smith is permeated with the influence of Plato or Aristotle, or he is an individual of more than ordinary intelligence. We can make various inferences concerning the relationship between the character of his

¹ It may be pointed out that a *complete* discussion of the notion of survivals involves questions of the nature of influence. Here we deal with the influence of X on Y, while in survivals we have phenomena *y* in individuals Y which (the theory assumes) are due to earlier individuals X, from whose stage of thought they have "survived."

mind and that of Plato or Aristotle, and concerning the significance of the points of resemblance and difference. If Mr. Smith is indubitably influenced by a certain book, whatever we may think of that book we have still got him to reckon with. Whenever A is influenced by B, from our knowledge of B we can gain some notion of the development and character of A, while from A, in turn, we often gain some further notion of B.¹ When there is reason to suspect that an environment has received some external influence, it is necessary to consider what body of thought the alleged traces presuppose, and even though the influence be beyond dispute, we have still to enquire what we can infer as regards the stage previously reached by the environment. The question is still discussed whether Nature advances by leaps. In dealing with thought a comprehensive survey must be taken when profound developments suddenly appear. Painting in Flanders was born in a day, but the soil was prepared by the skill in other arts already reached.² Darwinism and Wellhausenism seem to some to be immense and sudden revolutions, but a larger view shows that preliminary stages had paved the way. When that which was new persists and develops we infer that it has appealed and has been adjusted to the environment. No doubt political and other causes contributed, but they are not the sole causes, and it is a curious *insouciance* that finds in purely external factors the key to the success of a movement and overlooks the cases when an environment will not accept the new, or will, when occasion offers, throw it off. No conception of advance can afford to ignore the failures in past history. Yet the progress of a religion has sometimes been ascribed solely to historical factors, in so one-sided a fashion, that it is apparently

¹ So, when an impression is made by an object B upon the subject A, our conception of B enables us to estimate A, while A, in turn by his conception of B, can add to our experience and knowledge of B.

² C. H. Caffin, *How to study Pictures*, p. 52.

forgotten that people accept and hold beliefs for reasons which are not entirely different from those which have made us accept and cling to our own. Questions of originality and influence bring home the fact that successful influence affects things as wholes by promoting the development of the environment concerned. In education this makes the difference between the teacher and the "crammer." Wherever there is development there is a certain continuity, and it is only too easy to exaggerate the features that have developed and see nothing but differences, or to exaggerate the continuity and the sameness and thus ignore the most characteristic differences.¹

¹ From the ethnological point of view the question of outside influence by an alien people is important for the development of thought, but it has now to be recognized that not every possible cause of influence actually succeeds in exerting any influence, and that the influence is often temporary, partial, and almost indefinable. See above, p. 311 *seq.* (and p. 312 n.). The weakness of the purely ethnological position is the tendency to ignore psychological and historical methods, in particular to overlook the *psychical* nature of processes which are said to be purely social. In other words, sociological data have underlying them psychical factors, though often of a very rudimentary type. Cf. below, p. 412 *seq.*

CHAPTER X

DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUITY

II

The attitude of history to the new.—Our attitude in comparing things leads us usually to exaggerate either the resemblances or the differences. Now, when an environment assimilates that which is new, one of two results commonly happens, either (*a*) it does not treat it as new, but puts it into the old perspective, or (*b*) it treats it as entirely new, and seems to regard it as the beginning of a new age. In certain parts of the Pentateuch we can, on the critical view, recognize early Judaism as systematized for the first time in the post-exilic age. But it has been carried back many centuries and ascribed to the age of Moses.¹ Judaism in this way tended to obscure the great importance of the prophets and the developments due to them and to others by finding an ancient foundation of its tenets. It did not recognize the new, but put it into an old perspective. Now, when the reorganized religion, due to the influence of the prophets, was ascribed to the time of Moses, we gain the very useful fact that Moses

¹ Some writers, however (outside the Canon), went further and ascribed the origin of certain of the features to the times of Abraham and Jacob, of Noah, and even Adam. Moreover, it came to be believed that, while the written law, the charter of Judaism, dated from the time of Moses, an oral law had been given, but was handed down esoterically, and appeared in the common law of the later ages.

had already been regarded as the founder of a new stage, else we cannot explain why the new form should also be carried back and associated with him. There was obviously a clear tradition of Moses as an inaugurator of new conditions, and this is the more interesting since, according to *other* traditions, the roots of the religion go back before his time. When we examine, on critical lines, the relationship between the patriarchal narratives and the Mosaic legislation, we find that we have a compromise between two distinct points of view, one finding the inauguration of Judaism in the time of Moses, the other in that of the pre-Mosaic patriarchs (notably Abraham), and both obscuring the important part played by the prophets. Similarly, from some points of view, a new perspective of tradition begins at the rise of Christianity and Mohammedanism, although, from others, these are rather to be regarded as new and distinctive stages in a greater and more universal development. The difficulty of determining absolutely is illustrated by the different attitudes to the place of the Reformation in the history of Christendom, and to the question whether the Old Testament is or is not wholly bound up with the New. The same fluctuation appears in research when such figures as Darwin and Wellhausen have been regarded as the founders of modern research in their departments in such a way that it has even been thought that, if their work could be proved to be wrong, Darwinism and Wellhausenism would immediately collapse. On the other hand, when we free ourselves from this artificial objectification of thought and take a larger perspective, we can see that Darwin and Wellhausen are really great inaugurators of a new stage in a process of development that was already in existence. In all such developments as these, destructive criticism of the great figures of the past does not affect, so vitally as is sometimes thought, those who have been influenced by them and who seek to

carry on and adjust their work to changing conditions. There are these two fundamental and opposing tendencies: one to see very distinctive and definite stages in the past; the other to see the result of development in such a way that the stages tend to be obscured. The former tends to sever too sharply one stage from another, the latter tends to merge the old and the new and to minimize the change. To a certain extent, the former is often characteristic of the self-consciousness of superiority and of progressiveness movement, while the latter appears to characterize the environment; the environment as a whole clings to its traditional inheritance, whereas the more detached individual in his progress pushes out from the rest. But this is only half the truth, the tendencies are bound up with one's perspective of past history, with convictions of the historical framework of one's ideals, and with one's sense of continuity with the past.

Legal fictions and continuity.—Next, let us notice that there is a very general inclination to treat what is really new as the old in a new form. The novelty is "evolution" not "revolution." It is a *bona fide* process from the point of view of the individual. In the development of law, legal rigidity is overcome and law is brought into harmony with current thought and conditions by this process. New rules are introduced, surreptitiously as it were, but the effort is made to conceal the fact that there has been any change. Of the superstructures that were raised on the basis of the English land law, the late F. W. Maitland remarked: "One after another delicate devices were invented for the accommodation of new wants within the law; but only by the assurance that the old law could not be frankly abolished can we be induced to admire the subtlety that was thus displayed."¹ Sir Henry Maine, in his well-known work on

¹ *Ency. Brit.* (11th ed.), art. "English Law," vol. ix. p. 605.

Ancient Law (chap. ii.), in pointing out the significance of this adjustment, uses the term "legal fiction" to signify "any assumption which conceals, or affects to conceal, the fact that a rule of law has undergone alteration, its letter remaining unchanged, its operation being modified." He refers to cases where "the *fact* is . . . that the law has been wholly changed; the fiction is that it remains what it always was." Sir Frederick Pollock, in his notes (edition of 1907), in referring to later advance in legal ideas, remarks that "it would be rash to suppose that the age of legal fictions is wholly past." The general tendency is to work upon existing law, and he observes: "It is true that at many times the Courts have been over-anxious to avoid the appearance of novelty; and the shifts to which they resorted to avoid it have encumbered the Common Law with several of the fictions which Maine denounces . . ." (p. 46 *seq.*). The point to emphasize is the fact that it is quicker, better, and more usual to work upon an old basis than to form a new one, and adjustments are more readily and completely made by this procedure, even though the interpretation may be a somewhat liberal one. Sir Frederick Pollock himself says: "Perhaps Maine's exposition hardly brings out the prevailing motive for introducing fictions, the desire of obtaining a speedier and more complete remedy than strictly appropriate form of procedure allows."¹

This deliberate process illustrated by the rather misleading term "legal fiction" is a convention which all parties understand. To quote Robertson Smith: "It is

¹ Reference may also be made to the article in the *Ency. Brit.* (vol. x. p. 319). The following quotation is of interest: "Fictions which appear in the form of principles are not so easily dealt with by legislation. To expel them formally from the system would require the re-enactment of vast portions of law. A change in legal modes of speech and thought would be more effective. The legal mind instinctively seizes upon concrete aids to abstract reasoning." For the problem of the "reconstruction" of theology the analogy in the field of law is of some value.

found more convenient to present the new law in a form which enables it to be treated as an integral part of the old legislation. Thus in Roman jurisprudence all law was supposed to be derived from the Laws of the Twelve Tables, just as in Israel all law was held to be derived from the teaching of Moses. The whole object of this way of treating the law was to maintain the continuity of the legal system." ¹ We have to notice that the process has a twofold important aim: (a) it maintains a continuity, and (b) this continuity involves a much greater body of thought; not merely must the legal system be maintained, but this system is bound up with a traditional framework of an historical nature. The continuity has aspects partly legal, partly historical.

New interpretations of the old.—The meaning we attribute to a law may be—objectively—the meaning it had, or—subjectively—the one which we are sure it had; the difference between these two alternatives is seen when the meaning we give it is disputed. We interpret the child and the savage from our body of thought; we may understand them aright, but we can very easily attribute to them a meaning which they would repudiate if they had the opportunity. In theological argument the meaning we see in some datum is that which our body of thought suggests. The practice readily admits of being carried to extreme lengths, especially when we are called upon to justify our interpretation, and the result is seen in tortuous argumentation, whether it be wholly theological, wholly legal, or, as in Rabbinical and Moham-
medan and early scholastic discussions, a blend of theology and law. On the one hand, we intuitively see inter-connexions. We perceive a certain external or internal relationship between two distinct data; they are mutually supplementary: such and such evidence, although really belonging to another environment or another age,

¹ *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2nd ed. p. 384 seq.

associates itself with that which belongs to this environment or this age and is part of our body of thought. Unless this were so, there would be no possibility of seeing any old in a new form, or any new in an old form. On the other hand, the process easily becomes artificial, when we more consciously and deliberately endeavour to find the interconnexion, when, for example, we desire to prove that certain data have a particular application to our thought, or that a certain novelty, whatever it be, has a precedent in the past. Not only is there no clear line between the more subconscious and the more conscious process, but the fundamental questions whether there is or is not an interconnexion, whether such and such a thing is really new, will be disputed. The exegesis or interpretation may seem forced and artificial, but it is more than probable that *usually* it is not so to those who employ it ; and if we are to do justice to one another, we have to realize that if one man sees the old in a new form, and another sees it as wholly new, both are right from their point of view.¹

The value of our authorities.—It is important to notice, however, that the external or older authority, and that which is based upon it, are not to be confused ; a thing is not necessarily untrue because the authority or proof is not valid. Since through Eve sin entered into the world, one old writer urged the subordinate position of women ; while the Rabbis argued that the sex which had extinguished “ the light of the world ” must atone by lighting the festal candles on the Sabbath. A simple illustration of this character is enough to show that a view is really independent of the considerations which suggested it or by which it was supported. So also a Rabbi used the old law against putting a stumbling-block before the

¹ *Usually* is italicized, since it might be argued that men may indulge in arguments in which they have no belief. Such insincerity is possible but it cannot be postulated. See p. 363 *seq.*

blind as grounds for cautioning a father against striking a grown-up child, while a Christian employed the law of the muzzled ox to show that the labourer was worthy of his hire.¹ These views would be readily evaluated at the present day quite apart from the Old Testament passages with which the writers found a connexion. But the connexion is significant in that it allows us to perceive how the writers found it necessary to support or strengthen their statements. They give us *their* opinions, shared of course by others, and we can estimate their value from our body of thought ; but they also throw light upon the body of thought that prevailed, and they exemplify those processes which we employ at the present day. We are accustomed to support our views by appeal to authorities which are recognized by the group to whom we appeal. The view is, at all events for the time being, our own view, but unless people are to accept *our* authority, we are wont to show that the view is not an entire novelty, the product of one single individual. We use names which the group can estimate, and if we refer to the past, it is a past in which the group is specially interested. There is a compromise between the assertion and the repression of one's individuality, between what the individual gives as his own and its connexion with the body of thought already possessed by the group.

In the East a tradition is estimated by the name in whose authority it is given rather than upon any intrinsic merits of its own, much in the same way that we are often influenced more by the fact that So-and-so said a thing than by any question of its value. This is natural, because the feelings evoked by the mention of some authority whom we know, are not the same as those when the authority is unknown. The woman who affirmed that if the Bible had said that Jonah swallowed the whale she would believe it, has many hardly less extreme analogies among those

¹ See *Ency. Brit.* vol. xviii. p. 421 *seq.*, vol. xxvi. p. 385.

who manifest an equally indiscriminate confidence in their authoritative sources! It is the place the source holds in our total body of thought that influences us, and by observing the various forms which the connecting-process takes we gain some idea of the instinctive desires of the individual. The reason why a belief is held is not to be confused with the existence or persistence of the belief; but while a bad reason does not necessarily destroy the belief, to replace it by a sound one in harmony with the best thought of the day is all for the good of the environment.

The sense of continuity.—What is new must be worked into a body of thought which is our own. The process is a blend of conscious and unconscious activity. Ancient historians would put into the mouths of their actors appropriate sentiments, and in early times “it was a regular convention of historical writing that the historian should express his views of a situation by making the chief actors in that situation utter speeches in which it is explained.”¹ The value of history was felt to lie in its application to current conditions, and consequently, while there was one tendency to show its significance for the present, there was another tendency, on the part of those to whom the records meant much, to show that the present had its roots in the past. The underlying feeling is that of historical continuity, a feeling that expresses itself in that procedure which unites the past with the present by seeing the old in the new, or the new in the old. “In ancient time and specifically in Israel, the sense of historical continuity could only be preserved by the constant compliance on the part of the past with the requirements of the present, that is to say, its constant renovation and transformation. This may be called the law of religious historiography.”² The quotation from

¹ Prof. Percy Gardner, *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 393.

² Kuenen, “The Critical Method,” in the *Modern Review*, 1880, p. 705.

the Dutch scholar, Kuenen, although referring more particularly to the historical writings of the Israelites and the early Christians, expresses in a somewhat narrow manner what is more generally true. The "constant renovation and transformation," which is so striking in the Old Testament (viewed critically), prove on closer examination to be characteristic of the human mind, and his remarks are an interesting illustration of the common fact that keen observation in some relatively small department of research will bring to light features which have a much wider application, that a correct generalization can be drawn from a few particulars. In the article in question, Kuenen illustrates, from a survey of the varying conceptions of David, the effort to represent the Hebrew hero in the light of subsequent ages, from one later point of view in the book of the Chronicles, and from another in his traditional association with the Psalter. Often in the Old Testament the composite sources reflect the desire to connect the present with the past, by finding in the past a foreshadowing of or a precedent for changes that had not yet come into being; and here, and elsewhere, continuity is enhanced by prophecies which appropriately point forward to subsequent events. The sense of continuity is also manifested when it is felt that events are justified by supernatural authority; for the supernatural being is one that is bound up with the history of the environment. Whether our evidence be "historical" or not, we have to recognize a feeling of interconnexion and continuity which finds an expression or an explanation in the profoundest ideas offered by the current thought. And apart from this, we ourselves commonly talk of our history, our country and its past, our land and its borders. Living only a few decades, we yet regard ourselves instinctively as part of some larger unit in time and space. We thus associate ourselves both with the dead who are responsible for existing

conditions and with the living who are making the future. This sense of interconnexion and continuity is not due to religion, rather does it underlie religious and other ideas which are not always in harmony with the current knowledge. It is important, therefore, to notice that there are underlying tendencies which need a fitting expression, and which are untouched by any destructive criticism of the particular way in which they happen to be clothed.

The rediscovery of the old.—Henrik Ibsen, writing on "The Saga and the Ballad," gives an eloquent description of the common consciousness of the "people" wherein there is much that might be quoted to support or supplement these pages.¹ He is dealing with ballad poetry and the relationship between the environment and the individual. "The ballad," he observes, "is not written by a single individual; it is the sum total of the poetic strength of a whole people; it is the fruit of its poetic endowment." It is an adjustment between the gifts of the one and the cravings of the many. The individual "awakens to conscious life what was lying dreaming and fermenting in the people themselves; his poetic genius lies essentially in a clear-sightedness as to the manner of thing the people require expressed, and in a certain capacity for giving this expression and form in which the people may most easily recognize what is expressed as their own." Here is the point: in the perfect adjustment between the individual and the environment the former is merged in the latter, the gifts he offers are those which are the people's own, he becomes immortal but nameless. Besides, "if the new is to attract the people," says Ibsen, "it must also in a certain sense be old, it must not be invented, but re-discovered; it must not appear as strange or at variance with that range of ideas which is the heritage of the people, and in which national strength for the greater part rests. It must not

¹ *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1906, pp. 319-331.

be given them as a foreign domestic utensil, the use of which is unknown to them and which does not fit into the usual ways of the house ; it must be restored as an heirloom which we had forgotten, but which we remember as soon as we see it, because all sorts of memories are associated with it—memories which, as it were, lay within us and fermented darkly and dimly until the poet came and put them into words." Here is another aspect of the ideas of interconnexion and continuity—*a recovery of what had been forgotten, an awakening to what had been lost, a reassertion of something which links the present with the past.*

The Golden Age.—This is especially interesting when an environment has a tradition at the back of it, and a change is represented as a return, or a feeling of change prompts the desire to return. But there has never been any actual return to earlier conditions or an earlier body of thought, the intervening period has always brought some modification that makes this impossible (p. 126). Now, this recovery of the lost may seem intelligible when an environment possesses literature or traditions of an earlier period, but such sources do not give the period as it actually was, and the feature recurs where there are no historical sources. In Mohammedanism there have been new movements which, though regarded by their opponents as harmful innovations, were, from their own point of view, a return to the purity of the earliest form of Islam. The feature is conspicuously illustrated in the Old Testament history with its perspective of the elaborate Mosaic religion and law followed by alternating periods of apostasy and return. It reappears in the idea of a possible return to Nature ; nobody knows what it means, save that it will be better than modern conditions and culture. It reappears also in the idea of a Golden Age, and it underlies the theory of a primitive revelation and a subsequent decadence.

We have here not merely the feeling of a past with which the present has some close connexion, it is also that of a height in the past from which there has been a decline and to which there must be a return—a starting-point we have left, but which is our goal. Maine, too, in his study of *Ancient Law* observes the feature (p. 71) : “ The movement of the collective opinion of a whole society is too palpable to be ignored, and is generally too visibly for the better to be decried, but there is the greatest disinclination to accept it as a primary phenomenon, and it is commonly explained as the recovery of a lost perfection—the gradual return to a state from which the race has lapsed.” This “ tendency to look backward instead of forward for the goal of moral progress ” has a very dangerous side, as Maine himself illustrates. The notion of a return to a higher state can be paralleled from the literature of religious experience. It must be regarded as a *bona fide* feeling. But all feelings are expressed in terms of the concrete world of perception, whether our heart feels “ heavy ” or our conscience is “ smitten.” The feeling of departure from or return to some past stage of life is one that must needs be expressed metaphorically or symbolically, and the danger lies in the tendency to be misled by the language.

Inheritance in pure lines.—Now, in the movement of thought we do not get any return to an older position, but an old position can come back in a new form. It might be more helpful to regard the course as spiral, in that, although we seem to return, we are upon a higher level (p. 129). But even the metaphor of the spiral is exceedingly inadequate. The suggestion was made that the process might be regarded as a “ reassertion ” of some idea, of some portion of the consciousness, so that the movement, with its characteristic “ reassertion,” might be broadly spoken of as a reversion to type—a process of growing until there is conformity to an earlier

type. In the simplest form of heredity in lowly organisms—that from a single parent—there is abundant variation, but there is throughout an average character, proceeding from the parent downwards; the line reveals numerous individual characteristics, but a very real constancy prevails, though it may be somewhat obscured. This type of heredity is that on “pure lines.”¹ Now the concept of a “pure line” serves usefully to suggest a better way of looking at evidence for any apparent return or for any reassertion of earlier features. It avoids the spatial and crudely concrete metaphors and is in harmony with the view that significant developments of thought can be compared to significant stages in the course of organic evolution (p. 319 *seq.*). In the history of research, in the ever-growing movement of a particular body of thought, and in all life, the apparent return to any older position is really a further progress in which certain ideas reassert themselves so as to form part of some new synthesis. Underlying manifold differences the course presents a recurrence of features fundamentally similar, just as in the case of “inheritance in pure lines,” despite variations of greater or less importance, there is a completely constant element. In the development of some individuals we find throughout a certain sameness of fundamental conceptions combined with a remarkable progress in certain directions; they are thoroughly revolutionary from one point of view, from another they are as thoroughly conservative or orthodox. Robertson Smith himself may be cited as an illustration; stage by stage we see the development of tendencies which were to shock orthodox opinion, but there is a persisting “average character,” which synthesizes and knits

¹ See J. A. S. Watson, *Heredity*, chap. v. (in Jack's “The People's Books”): “‘A pure line . . . is completely constant and extremely variable.’ This apparent paradox means that variation occurs within a pure line, as everywhere in nature, yet the germ plasm, and therefore the heritage of future generations, remains unaltered” (p. 47).

together into one system his most revolutionary and his most orthodox ideas. Easy though it may be to point out features which diverged from the "pure line," yet there is a general progress of his system as a whole which, while it made him a psychological problem to his contemporaries, allows us to treat his life as an illustration of the application of the biological concept to the development of thought.¹ When in an earlier chapter we looked at reassertion from the point of view of the individual, we treated such a case as his renewal of affection for his parents after a period of detachment as a reassertion of what had once been part of his consciousness (p. 127). This, as also any case where a man "returns," after detachment, to the religion of his youth, may be more fruitfully regarded as a further development on the principle of the "pure line"; a further growth to a stage which resembles not the preceding stage, but an earlier. It is a synthesis in which religious ideas have an integral part.

The more striking the recurrence of certain fundamental convictions in ancient and modern man, the more closely we approach the question whether the consciousness of the normal individual contains or comprises that which, though it may seem to be obscured or unrepresented, is part of the subconscious side of his life waiting to reassert itself as he develops.² Although the consciousness of the young child eludes us, he has a readiness to take an attitude to the Universe which, as he grows up, is very commonly adjusted to a religious frame. Although it is often difficult to understand the consciousness of rudimentary peoples, there is once more an attitude which in higher levels expresses itself more fully in religious or semi-religious terms. In studying the differences and resemblances in thought we are always involving

¹ See above, p. 66 *seq.*

² So, too, there are instincts which only manifest themselves after a certain time and under appropriate conditions.

the problem of the consciousness, the development of which in the individual, the environment, or the race constantly shows points of similarity which recall the biological concept of a "pure line." If the germ—biologically—contains all that goes to make the individual, we cannot ultimately sever the psychological and psychical aspects of his natural growth from the physiological and physical. The physical and the psychical problems cannot be kept entirely apart; and the evidence for the oneness of all life suggests that the oneness has a psychical as well as a physical meaning. In this way, both the instinctive and the conscious ideas of interconnexion and continuity may represent the *psychical* aspect of the *physical* interrelations of organic life. There is no desire to press the point, however; it is enough that sooner or later the problems of life and thought (instinct-intelligence) must converge.

The self and the past.—Emerson, in a fine essay on "History," says, "We are always coming up with the emphatic facts of history in our private experience, and verifying them here. All history becomes subjective; in other words, there is properly no history; only biography." Earlier, a claim was lodged on behalf of myths, legends, and all that material which offends our intellect, on the plea that they had persisted, and therefore apparently had some value, that they represented the beliefs and ideas of the past, and that they had a value for all research that depended for its success upon a closer understanding of human nature. From rudimentary savages to the most scholarly of historians and anthropologists there is an interest in the past which we are apt to take for granted, until, perchance, we are arrested by those who would leave the past to look after the past or who would have no compunction in destroying old monuments. Is this normal interest in the past some instinctive feeling of continuity? Interest in the past is an interest in our own race, within the limits laid down by tradition and

history. There are definite landmarks and divisions in space. Not all areas are felt to be involved; there is a particularism in the attitude to the Universe which reflects itself instructively when we compare the "histories" of different groups or peoples. There is a general tendency to find definite starting-points and landmarks, and although the landmarks indicate what was felt to be of importance, they are apt to be misleading in that they sometimes tend to separate too rigidly the stages in development. There is a tendency for events and persons to stand out with greater vividness; ancestries are associated with them, and upon one figure or age are sometimes focused what was really spread over a considerable period, what belongs to a different period, or what has no historical value whatever. Events and figures often gain a prominence which overshadows other claims, and if historical criticism has often been sadly destructive, it finds other landmarks of importance, thus illustrating the natural tendency to "see" definite stages in the process of development.¹ Interest in the past has been enhanced by the links connecting it with the present. If it is difficult to realize that the siege of Troy, one of a great series of movements, was long the first of the links, it has been through the influence of Christianity that the Bible account of the Creation of Adam and the dispersion of mankind afforded a favourite *terminus a quo*.² If our interest in Egypt, Assyria, and other old Oriental lands lay in the fact that they are lands of the Bible, and the Bible an integral part of the thought of our environment, new links are forged by the discoveries

¹ To say that these and other landmarks are "objective" facts is to confirm the "subjective" impressions which the evidence makes upon us; for to men of old the Deluge and the Dispersion of Mankind were no less "facts."

² "For a thousand years the myth of descent from the dispersed heroes of the conquered Trojan race was a sacred literary tradition throughout western Europe" (*Ency. Brit.* vol. xxvii. p. 317).

which associate them with the history of our culture and civilization. If biblical criticism in any way tends to weaken that interest which they had, solely because of the place held by the Bible, this same criticism combines with other lines of research to make both the Bible and these lands a profounder phenomenon in human history. Whereas our forefathers had a perspective based upon the early chapters of Genesis, so that history could be traced back to the sons of Noah, and, earlier, to Adam; modern knowledge is slowly replacing this by a profounder perspective of the history of man. In this these lands are again of the first importance, not indeed for history in the narrower sense, but for the part they played in the development of thought and culture, and for an influence which the modern age does not usually realize. Once more the lands will be explicitly bound up with our conceptions of the past, but not in the way that was formerly apprehended, when the early chapters of Genesis were the only source of our knowledge of the beginnings of the race.

History and religion.—There would seem to be an innate tendency in man to associate himself with the past, or—to be more correct—with what is understood to be the past history of his race.¹ There is a demand, and it is supplied, and quite apart from the true, historical value of what is narrated as past history—whether it be the Garden of Eden or the Siege of Troy—the presence of this demand and the manner in which it is supplied deserve our recognition. Even such backward savages as the natives of Central Australia have their valued traditions of early ancestors with whom are bound up the current institutions; and in various parts of the world the importance attached to the tribal traditions is very significantly represented. Youths in their initiation into the group are taught the traditions of the tribe, scenes describing events in the past are acted, and the memory

¹ The whole science of historical criticism lies in the correction.

of particular incidents, which are felt to be especially important for the people, is regularly kept alive. Until they lose their original force these traditions are the authentic history of the tribe or group, the accepted convictions of an interconnexion and continuity which are seriously felt ; and when we propose to divide them into myth, legend, saga, etc., we are giving our estimate, and not that of the group which cherished them. They had a very real value, and we are told that among the Sioux Indians the tribal traditions are " mysterious things not to be spoken of lightly or told on ordinary occasions." The differentiation between religious and secular history is convenient, but has no absolute value. We may study history purely from a non-religious point of view, but many would agree with Niebuhr that " history is of all kinds of knowledge, the one which tends most decidedly to produce belief in Providence." ¹ The interconnexion of vicissitudes and their culmination in the present produce a feeling of a Purpose that transcends man, and this feeling is supplemented by the innate tendency to feel a continuity with the distant past. The feature has its religious and non-religious aspects ; and when the feeling is bound up with supernatural ideas, there is in the body of thought a larger interconnexion and a profounder sense of value. The feeling, that otherwise may be merely instinctive and scarcely recognized, becomes part of a body of thought more intense and more coherent, and the individual, the group, its beliefs and institutions, its ideas of the past and of the future form parts of one large interconnected whole.

The sense of unity.—The continuity with the past frequently involves the belief that the group can be

¹ Lord Acton, in his *Lecture on the Study of History* (delivered in 1895), declared that " the wisdom of divine rule appears not in the perfection but in the improvement of the world," and he quotes many utterances on the study of history as a demonstration of the truths of religion (pp. 31 seq., 100 seq.).

traced back to supernatural or semi-supernatural ancestors, that the origin of the group is essentially connected with that of every individual, and, very often in the lower levels, that every birth is more directly due to supernatural than to ordinary physical causes. The beliefs imply a feeling of oneness within the group; the individual members are more like one another than unlike, and as long as the group-feeling is maintained, all have similar ideas and views of their continuity with the past and with the supernatural. The ideas of continuity and interconnexion have persisted on different levels and in different forms of expression, and where individuals have come forward in any period of disturbance to influence their environment, they appear to be actuated by a deeper feeling of the oneness of the groups with which they are concerned, a feeling which, when religion is involved, is a nearer relationship with the supernatural. The underlying similarity in the ideas of interconnexion and continuity is impressive when we remember that we deal with feelings and convictions that have powerfully moved mankind. To recall the concept of the "pure line," there is an underlying tendency of the consciousness—though it is not always present or recognizable—and unless we conceive some new psychical constitution in the future, the feelings will always be part of the consciousness.¹

The religious and non-religious aspects.—When the ideas connect the individual with a remote past and with an unseen present, they have an immensity which we are apt to belittle because they happen to be expressed in a form which we cannot accept. The supernatural is involved in a way which we adjudge from our current attitude to the supernatural. The feelings expressed in

¹ They may be obscured or repressed, just as in all specialistic research progress is made by detaching oneself from that which seems to be irrelevant, but as in research what is detached may reappear to give it a further impetus, so in every individual the ideas of interconnexion and continuity cannot perhaps be permanently hidden.

religion or in poetry, however, are not essentially different from the conclusions to which modern scientific research is tending. If the concept of a "pure line" is full of suggestion for the notion of a fundamental average type underlying external dissimilarities, the ancestry of each and every individual is carried back to conditions so remote that they can hardly be conceived, and we gain ideas of the interconnexion between man, organic life, and the Universe which are staggering in their immensity. The interconnexion and continuity are almost overpowering. Now, inasmuch as chemical, biological, and other "scientific" ideas of man rest upon intellectual research, and the supernatural is not involved, they may appear, to some, to have a greater validity than the convictions in early and later religions. But from the psychological standpoint all convictions are valid as data. All represent the offspring of the consciousness; and all are valid to those who hold them true. The knowledge which has led up to modern scientific investigation has grown out of a knowledge which justified the supernatural ideas; both arise from an ability to "see" continuity and interconnexion, from a mingling of conscious and unconscious selection of data, and from combined processes of perceiving and conceiving. Knowledge founded upon objects of perception appears to have a superior validity, but of these objects we only have impressions, and these impressions depend upon a man's experience, his environment, and the period at which he lived. Whatever we think of the significance for knowledge of those ideas which we class as supernatural, it is at all events clear that the instinctive tendencies to find continuity and interconnexion are not always consciously bound up with the supernatural. Men are working for a future generation irrespective of any conviction of immortality, and whatever be their purposes, all analogy shows that they will be merged into later and

fuller purposes. There are instinctive activities which are not necessarily formulated in terms of the supernatural, but they cannot be kept distinct from those more consciously held convictions which characterize the world's religions. The fact that at sundry times there is no co-ordination of the religious (or supernaturalistic) and other aspects of life and thought must not blind us (*a*) to the repeated co-ordination in ages and lands, where, however, the state of knowledge was inferior to ours of to-day, (*b*) to the aim of all intelligent men to co-ordinate such experience and knowledge as they have, and (*c*) to the undoubted truth that a co-ordination which excludes supernaturalistic and related religious data is, logically speaking, objectively incomplete.

Self-consciousness and development. — In religion the ideas of continuity and interconnexion are inextricably interwoven with the supernatural; every individual is born into some relationship with the Universe and the supreme power in it, as apprehended by the group, and the instinctive feelings find their expression in the common thought which the group shares. Now when we turn to ordinary individual experience we know that we are wont to find definite landmarks in our past—going to and leaving school or the University, getting engaged, entering business, and so forth. On reflexion, however, we should find that there was a real connexion between the stage where we felt that a new era had begun and its predecessor. There are certain historical “landmarks,” as it were, which could induce us to sever too rigidly our life-history before and after them, and these events in gaining a prominence tend to make us focus upon the dividing lines more than actually belongs to them. It is so also in history and story when things tend to concentrate upon a few events or persons. On the other hand, although we are constantly assimilating some new things into our body of thought, there is the other tendency to weld together the

old and the new. We can hardly introspect and sort out the contents of our mind, and say that *this* goes back to one date and *that* to another ; commonly there is an amalgam of new and old, the old taking a new shape or new form. It is easy to go to one or the other of the two extremes, to see definite stages to which we ascribe the birth or inauguration of what was already in process of being, or to view the data in such a way that we obscure the development that has actually happened. When there is a continuous development of thought, we cannot "see" either the process of change itself or the numerous changes that are actually contributing to them. A definite event may crystallize the movement, in the individual as in research or history, but it is not the sole factor in the process. The shrub may flower on a certain date, this is a definite event, but there had been preparatory steps. The elm may fall in a storm, but that this and not every elm falls, points to other factors contributing to the occurrence.

The mystery of self-consciousness.—Were it not for the impression made upon us by the events in our own history, it would be very difficult to realize the progress of our development. As it is, what we now possess often seems to have grown up with us ; although our notion of the earlier stages is not what we had at the time, but coloured by later years. We feel the continuity of Self in our life-experience, and the subjective feeling has its objective complement when we look outside and see a genetic succession of stages in which there is continuity despite development. The continuity or feeling of self-identity we experience in ourselves cannot be argued away. The feeling is confirmed by retrospect and by external observation, and when it is more profound it looks ahead and claims that the continuity will be lasting.¹ The

¹ If it be more correct to say that self-consciousness and the feeling of continuity make the individual unable to entertain seriously the

conviction or the intuition is what external observation would lead us to infer. The events from this moment and onwards belong to the unknown ; yet, as in the past, new vicissitudes will become part of our present feeling of continuity which will have a fuller content. And often the new is what we want and expect, though can we recognize it when we have not travelled along the road before ? We talk of being true to ourselves, or of realizing ourselves ; the words express the feeling, although we do not know our own consciousness and have never experienced the future. From time to time we may have the feeling of some culminating point so strongly that we cannot conceive a more intense development. It is said that the man who has fallen in love a few times believes that each occasion is the " real " thing ; and many a one no doubt can find on retrospection that it is certainly premature to assume that his consciousness has reached its fullest development. Now, this ever-growing, ever-advancing psychical continuity, which can be felt rather than expressed, may be likened to the stages in organic evolution. We can see that the tadpole evolves into a frog and the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, the acorn ends by being an oak, the young child grows into the man. Everywhere the development is normal, the genetic stages clear, and the interconnexion between earlier and later stages obvious. But when man has the feeling of psychical continuity, it is as though the oak knew that it had come from the sapling and the sapling from the acorn ; and if it is natural that the man should feel thus as regards the past, his sense of continuity in the future is as though the oak-sapling knew day by day that it was realizing its normal development and was true to its type. We can

notion of his possible annihilation, the *subjective* evidence has its *objective* aspect. For it is not difficult to show that what can be regarded as undergoing development cannot be said to be annihilated, and where annihilation seems to be its fate, the development is continued in some larger whole of which it was already a part. See p. 396.

see the acorn becoming the oak, and when we look into ourselves there is the same conviction of a continuity and interconnexion linking us with our childhood and with to-morrow. Whatever ideas, whether religious or otherwise, are involved, this feeling gives us a psychical continuity which is as much a reality to us as the fact that the acorn is developing into the oak. The simile is inadequate because we see the spiral-like series : oak—acorn—oak, whereas man has claimed a profound interconnexion and continuity with the past and the future. It is a striking fact that the individual at the last moments of his life is often filled with a fervent desire for the first human being whom he could have known—his mother. But it is still more striking when we read in religious literature of those who felt that death was a home-going. The experience is no convention ; the idea has arisen, appealed, and persisted. Though familiar in Christianity, in its essential form it is not wanting in other religions, and even in relatively low levels the individual is sometimes supposed to return to the state whence he came. It is unnecessary to refer at any length to other expressions of the idea. A widely-distributed feeling associates the birth and the death of the individual in such a way that although he develops during his lifetime, the initial starting-point and the final goal are the same. The psychical problem is not unconnected with the physical : the source of the individual's life and energy and what is conserved when he dies.

The goal as the starting-point.—We cannot sever these ideas from the conviction of a decline from an ideal or of a fall from a height which impels a man to move onwards to a goal which is to correspond to a distant past which he has not actually experienced. We cannot express this in terms of ordinary knowledge, and every effort to explain the unknown from the known only emphasizes the inadequacy of our symbols and figures. Even if we

could conceive the oak knowing that it came from an acorn, it does not become an acorn itself ; the sturdiest oak must some day fall, although the life-growth which is in it may animate other acorns. Knowledge based upon perception gives us a variety of parallels, each suggestive, but inadequate in itself to explain the phenomena these convictions present. Our logic, our categories, are too imperfect ; the problem of all problems cannot be solved, it can scarcely be stated save by attention to such aspects of life as we can apprehend. The essential feature of the psychical phenomena is the personality of the individual linking itself with (what we call) the Unknown, being actuated by his intuitions of this Unknown more forcibly than by anything else, and expressing his feelings and ideas in a perfect blend of what is knowable and obvious and what belongs to the Unknown. And furthermore, not only does personality develop, but there is the realization of development, and it is so strong that the conviction of interconnexion and continuity normally repudiates the idea of annihilation at death.

Death and the new birth.—Of all the landmarks in time that impress us, death is the greatest ; so much so, in fact, that we commonly regard it as the finale of the individual's activities. None the less we are aware that the death of an individual or of an empire is not necessarily an annihilation of what was associated with either upon this earth. Indeed, the whole progress of thought has been through the dead, and of their activities we are the heirs. The history of science, of criticism, or of a religion is a long stream of movements irrespective of the deaths of individuals concerned ; and this larger continuity is that which the individual feels when he has the conviction of the persistence of some part of himself. Even among rudimentary peoples there is not that difference between life and the after-life that modern or ancient contemplation suggests. Death with them is often only a

stage or a landmark in the existence of the individual. After all, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that everywhere bodily dissolution is normally a more serious blow to any group or environment than the knowledge of the near approach of it is to the individual itself.¹ It is noteworthy that among many peoples initiation not only brings the novice into a close relationship with the profoundest values of the group, not only unites him with the supernatural in what is felt to be a very real way, but often it involves the belief of a rebirth or a resurrection. The evidence points to a conviction that the novice is born into a new life, often he receives a new and secret name, he learns a secret language and acts as though he were indeed a new-born babe, inexperienced and ignorant of his surroundings. On the lower levels everything is more concrete ; the man does what he feels, he acts rather than proclaims his feelings.² On the higher ones, the entrance into a new and close relationship with the supernatural corresponds to certain feelings and convictions that are more deliberately formulated in conceptual terms of rebirth, etc. That a man must be born again in order to have Eternal Life is not an idea that could descend like an heirloom, or travel like a parcel. It presupposes an experience on the part of the individual which finds its

¹ Dr. W. H. R. Rivers (*Hibbert Journal*, x. p. 397 seq.) cites a remarkable case where the living individual under certain circumstances is regarded as belonging to the other world, and, as we should say, "dead."

² "To think a thing the savage must dance it" (R. R. Marett, *Ency. Brit.*, art. "Prayer," vol. xxii. p. 257). There is a general tendency for feelings and ideas to "act themselves out," and much of that which passes for "magic" corresponds to our practice of giving force or clarity to our ideas, as, for example, when we define a spiral with the help of our finger or when the tub-thumper accompanies his "down with the — [whatever it may be]" with an appropriate downward blow. Our common human nature shows itself alike in our more sporadic and unsystematized movements and in the more consecutive and co-ordinated behaviour on lower levels. True magic comes in when the external behaviour is regarded as solely decisive or conclusive ; but, often enough, the observer will misunderstand or underestimate the inward value of that of which he sees only the external aspects (p. 176).

utterance in the simplest expression that seems appropriate. Those who do not experience it may deny it. The conviction belongs to the problem of the development of man's consciousness, the expression of it to the history of the thought in the individual's environment.

There are certain occasions which have deeply impressed people in all levels, and just as bodily dissolution has been regarded as a step from one form of living to another, so, at initiation, conversion and on other occasions, there is a psychical development which is realized as the inauguration of a new period transcending bodily existence. Man has always seen in the dissolution of the body a profound event in the history of the individual; but it was commonly felt that an event quite as significant was the occasion when the individual entered the group and shared the supernatural convictions expressive of its feelings of interconnexion and continuity. In organic evolution we may trace, however incompletely, a line of ascent among perceptible objects from the simplest form of life to man; but there is a psychical evolution in the course of which the creature (animal and human) works for purposes which it does not and cannot conceive, and it reaches the point where man has the conscious conviction that the activities of life are part of something which lies outside the world of perception. Henceforward there has been the tendency for the mind to weave in one system or body of thought its convictions relating to both the Seen and the Unseen.

The craving for permanence and continuity.—The changes and the disappointments of life are bewildering and perplexing if we stop to reflect upon them; but relatively few of them make any impression upon the ordinary man. The amount of variation and defeat of anticipation is really enormous, but man's attitude is relatively stable; there is a continuity in its development.

The more serious troubles compel some adjustment of thought, but the individual normally finds equilibrium and gains a new unity. His normal tendency is to adjust the new and the old and to resist change, and if he may err in one direction, it is as great an error to see in the changes and developments of the past an instability which might tempt the individual to find his sole authority in himself. There is nothing changing, everything is changing ; or, with the French, the more you change, the more it is the same thing. To some there is nothing stable ; even ethical systems and principles of right and wrong are transient. But these confuse the kernel and the shell ; and, in ignoring the fundamental similarity of all mankind, ignore the Logic of Life. What is lasting is the skeleton or framework of thought, not the complete body or the absolute system, so rigid that there is no room for development. The permanent is the developing attitude with its method, logic, and spirit—the *Something* that applies itself to the changing *Something* with which it is inextricably combined. Permanence and change, continuity and development are correlative ; and whatever detached specialistic scrutiny may suggest, the normal tendency of man has been to see an “ abiding ” where all is “ passing.” If a closer retrospect upon the past shows us that there has been a profound similarity underlying disparity, and fundamental unity underneath disunity, and a recurrence of an “ average character ” through the whole development of thought, we gain a result which corresponds to that intuition and conviction in all religions which found something stronger and more abiding than man. And indeed, unless primitive and rudimentary men had had some instinct or conviction of this sort it is not easy to understand how they could have surmounted those enormous difficulties which beset those who first began to learn by experiment how to cope with Nature. The strength was found partly in the solidarity of the

group and partly in the supernatural, and these two—the group and the supernatural—are bound together in a way that is often extremely perplexing, although we ourselves are wont to unite them in a similar way when we say that “the voice of the people is the voice of God.” But the term “people” is only an abstraction, like the “environment,” the “people” are only a part of a larger inter-connected whole.

CHAPTER XI

FAILURE AND SUCCESS

A famous Egyptian reform.—In discussing attitudes towards changes, it is naturally indispensable to take into consideration the evidence when the environment will not tolerate or maintain a change. A very instructive illustration of this is afforded by an ancient religious revolution in Egypt during the first half of the fourteenth century B.C., when King Amenhotep IV., otherwise known as Ikhnaton, inaugurated a religion astonishing for its elevated conceptions.¹ His reform made a clean sweep of polytheistic practices and introduced a monotheism which though somewhat crude was certainly edifying ; but it had no lasting success, and the death of this remarkable king was soon followed by a reversion to the older faith, the environment refused to tolerate a reform which with all its excellent features was a subversion of cherished beliefs and ideas. At a time when Egypt was receiving universal tribute from the world as then known, Ikhnaton introduced what was practically a universal god. As has repeatedly been the case, the conceptions of the Supernatural run parallel to those of the political and social world. According to old current views the king stood in the closest relationship with the divine realm, and it was natural to combine the realm of the

¹ See J. H. Breasted, *History of Egypt* (1906), chaps. xviii. and xix. ; *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt* (1912), chap. ix.

king with ideas of the sovereignty of the national god. The supreme god Aton, whose worship he introduced, was no folk-god, no supernatural being especially interested in the lives of his small group of worshippers. Nor was he another form of any of the old-established deities. The introduction of the new god struck a blow at the old cults, and offended both priests and people, and the iconoclasm and persecution which attended this religious revolution made the subsequent reaction the stronger, and the same measure was meted out to Ikhнатon and his religion that he had meted out to the ancient religion of the land.

An ancient monotheism.—The new god Aton was an All-Creator, “the father and mother of all that he had made,” and among the remarkable examples of literature stimulated by this revolution is one fine hymn which illustrates the elevated and inspiring conceptions of this deity. The hymn is especially interesting on account of its notable similarity in thought and sequence to Psalm civ. Here the writer, to quote Professor Breasted, “grasped the idea of a world-dominator as the creator of nature . . . the birds fluttering about in the lily-grown Nile-marshes to him seemed to be uplifting their wings in adoration of their creator; and even the fish in the stream leaped up in praise of God. . . . He based the universal sway of God upon his fatherly care of all men alike, irrespective of race and nationality, and to the proud and exclusive Egyptian he pointed to the all-embracing bounty of the common Father of humanity, even placing Syria and Nubia before Egypt in his enumeration.” The revolutionary king had the historical and imperialistic spirit which accompanied the conception of the sovereignty of a Deity as far-reaching as his own. “His whole movement was but a return to nature, resulting from a spontaneous recognition of the goodness, and the beauty evident in it, mingled also with a consciousness of the mystery in it all.” With the words of

the Psalmist we are already familiar: "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy creatures" (Psalm civ. 24); but here in Egypt, some centuries earlier, this hymn proclaims: "How manifold are all Thy works. They are hidden from before us O Thou sole God, whose powers no other possesseth." There is, however, no very spiritual conception of the deity, no attribution of ethical qualities superior to those already attributed to the earlier god Amon. There is a simple grandeur in the conceptions, as there also was in the life of King Ikhnoton; but there is not that insistence upon the claims of the deity upon man which prevailed in the environment of the Psalmist. The deity Aton was god of all alike, but there is no emphasis upon the significance of this for the relationship of man to man.

Its ultimate failure.—The new god was a deification of the heat- and life-giving sun, symbolized by a disc sending forth rays which terminate in hands each grasping the symbol of life. It is important to notice that it was not the deification of a particular object. When the supernatural power is associated with any one object—an image or an animal—it has a precarious existence, because any loss of the object seriously affects the cult; in those rudimentary cults where the object is a whole species or something more resistant to loss or decay, the cult is more permanent. Thus, in totemism, although the animal may die, the fact that the species remains gives a stability which is very impressive when we contrast the fluctuations and developments at higher levels of society. Ikhnoton's cult deified the vital heat accompanying all life; it was the deification of a universal principle, as it were, replacing all polytheism by a somewhat materialistic sort of monotheism. Professor Breasted points out that "it plays in the new faith a similar important part which we find it assuming in the early cosmogonic philo-

sophies of the Greeks. . . . In his age of the world it is perfectly certain that the king could not have had the vaguest notion of the physico-chemical aspects of his assumption any more than had the Greeks in dealing with a similar thought; yet the fundamental idea is surprisingly true, and, as we shall see, marvellously fruitful. The outward symbol of his god thus broke sharply with tradition, but it was capable of practical introduction in the many different nations making up the empire and could be understood at a glance by any intelligent foreigner, which was far from the case with any of the traditional symbols of Egyptian religion." But what was expelled by one door was readmitted by another.¹ The king himself was raised to the rank of a god, his cult had its own priesthood, the god Aton, too, had his temple, but was doctrinally connected with the other gods. Adjustment, however, was impossible, and with that intolerance born of fervent narrow reforming zeal all rivals were gradually crushed. The consciousness of the people was stirred to its depths. Here was a new faith they could not understand; all they could see was the desecration of old-time beliefs, especially those regarding the future life. The old supernatural beliefs had been a protection and a consolation; now the worship of the old gods had been interdicted, and there was forced upon them a strange deity whom they did not know, and of whom they could gain no knowledge. The ideas of the new state-religion were not their ideas, and although the old gods disappeared, their disappearance was as transitory as when Theodosius eighteen centuries later banished the deities of Egypt. Ikhnaton, the great idealist, was born in an environment which he did not understand, and which could not understand him. Fortified by his convictions he pushed his revolution with all the impetuosity of which he was capable, destroying the memorials which

¹ G. Steindorff, *The Religion of the Ancient Egyptians* (1905), p. 62.

were antagonistic to his aims. With his death, discontent was fanned into flame, the old faith reasserted itself, and every effort was made to remove all trace of his reign, all recollection of his memory. The effects of his revolution passed away, his city became a ruin—the now famous Tell el-Amarna,—and only in recent times has it been possible to learn of an episode one of the most interesting of all brilliant failures in the history of the endeavour to elevate thought.

Other unsuccessful reforming efforts.—The course of history shows that the average level of thought can be raised ; none the less there can be no *a priori* assumption that the zealous reformer is wiser than his environment. In Palestine we observe the persistence of local cults in spite of a cultural monotheism, and, in the mediators and intercessors which orthodox Judaism disclaimed, we may discern the popular religious craving finding an outlet along the lines suggested by the more elevated religion.¹ Mohammed insisted upon the unity and absolute supremacy of Allah, “the whole polydaemonic scheme with a one god somewhere in the background, to which the Arabs seem to have attained, vanished. There was left no interceder with that one God.”² He swept away all that came between God and man—this is the outstanding feature of Mohammed’s reformation—in his teaching “the individual soul and its God are face to face.” Herein lay its weakness. The conception of the Deity was such that man could not bring himself into relation, it was too abstract and metaphysical, there was not that conception of Personality akin to man which allowed the individual to satisfy his cravings, and which, however expressed, is characteristic of all living religion. Two results ensued. On the

¹ Above, pp. 167 *sqq.*, 182.

² D. B. Macdonald, *The Religious Attitude and Life in Islam* (1909), pp. 37 *sqq.*

one hand there was a tendency in Mohammedanism to merge all creation in the Deity, and, on the other, there was a cult of saints and *welis*, and of other semi-supernatural figures, who link the purely human with the purely supernatural. This is the feature that recurs also in Roman Catholicism when authority has to strive unceasingly against a tendency which by resort to mediators and intercessors would obscure the recognition of a supreme though remote Deity. It is a feature which in one way or another is the fundamental problem of religion, and perhaps the chief contributing cause to movements leading either to fertile advance or to sterility and decay. As recently as the eighteenth century the East witnessed a fresh attack upon the local cults in the movement of the Wahhâbis, the followers of Mohammed ben 'Abd al-Wahhâb. Convinced that Islam was thoroughly corrupt, they proposed to re-establish the pure religion of Mohammed. They demolished the domes and ornamented tombs of the venerable saints, including that of Mohammed himself. They set their face against the idolatrous worship of Mohammed and the cults of the saints and of their relics; smoking, gaudy dress, and civilization as a whole they repudiated. They proclaimed that all men were equal before God, and that even the most devout cannot intercede with Him; Mohammed was a prophet sent to declare the will of God, but he was none the less a man. Although they were regarded by the Turks as infidels and innovators, they did not actually introduce any new precedent; their founder relied upon the traditions of Mohammed, their aim was to return to the primitive form of Islam which, as they thought, had been corrupted by subsequent innovation.¹

Reform of a part concerns the whole.—When all has been said, this revolution produced no conspicuous results; it found on its religious side no general response.

¹ Dr. R. A. Nicholson, *A Literary History of the Arabs* (1907), pp. 466 sqq.

However, antipathy to what is deemed to be later innovation and corruption in Islam finds its expression among the modern representatives of the Wahhābis in the powerful Sanusiyya brotherhood of North Africa (the Senussi) and other organizations of a political-religious character. If one is tempted to contrast the failure of the Wahhābis with the successes associated with the Reformation in Western Europe, it is necessary to remember that that Oriental movement is only part of a great leavening which is still at work, and that it is premature to compare with it one of a long series of vicissitudes in our civilization, the outcome of which belongs to the future. When there is any significant development in the conception of the relations between man and the Supernatural there is a profound body of thought which undergoes change and adjustment, and final adjustment has not yet been made in modern thought. The question of the success or failure of any reforming movement involves a consideration of the whole area concerned.

Partial outlooks. — All departures from the current thought are somewhat experimental; we are impressed by those that have succeeded, and success has arisen through adjustment between the individual or individuals and the environment. Those who make for a new movement, and those who are opposed are equally convinced of the rightness of their case; but while the former can and do more easily separate themselves from the common thought of the time, the latter cannot rid themselves so easily of their inheritance. The progress of any department of thought depends on a number of individuals, and they, viewed as a collective whole, represent a more comprehensive standpoint than any one of them, who is apt to overlook the importance of considerations which appeal to others. This applies also to the environment. On social, professional, religious, or other grounds greater importance is attached to some ideas or

to some individuals than others, and if we could take a bird's-eye view of the environment, we should do justice to the whole of it by recognizing that it consisted of a number of individuals each with his conviction of what was essential to the whole, what was relatively more important and necessary, what might be tolerated, and what was to be condemned. So long as opinion varies, the absolute superiority of any one part could not rightly be maintained; but the environment as a whole would be a great interconnexion of individuals who from an outside and impartial point of view were all necessary constituents, although these might not agree among themselves as to who was more or most valuable. In the same way we can perceive what ethical and other qualities are appreciated. Thus we can take any area or unit and gain an idea of the aggregate of values recognized consciously or subconsciously, and this will give us a better knowledge than any estimate based upon our particular predilections. Questions of relative superiority and importance can hardly be determined unless we have some scale of measurement or unless we know precisely what course conditions of life and thought will take. The field of thought, the group, the country, the Empire—each contains that which may insist on its own superiority in some particular direction. We might attempt to conceive some system where all was in proportion and everything had its due; but neither in thought nor in society is there this harmony, or else the individuals who make for movement would hardly be able to convince others that a better state of equilibrium could be attained. We judge by wholes. A distinctive superiority and inferiority in any one particular is readily extended to the whole to which we think it belongs, whereas if we could be more discriminating we should endeavour to weigh the good with the bad. But even then we should have to employ our own scale of measurement. The book of

which we approve or disapprove as a whole would be more ideally estimated if we could use more discrimination touching the several relevant aspects from which it could be viewed. But the ideal is hindered by our inability to form an estimate based upon an adequate knowledge of all the parts that made it a whole.¹ Nevertheless we aim at this ideal when we perceive that some older estimate is imperfect or erroneous, or that our own must take into account some new evidence or argument. Our own standpoint, therefore, though it is subjectively a whole—it *feels* complete—is not only imperfect, but it is only part of an aggregate of current standpoints, and consequently we can conceive a more complete one, by taking into account the current environment and by observing the tendency of our own to develop. The environment is more comprehensive than any individual, but both are consciously and unconsciously undergoing a development towards standpoints that are not yet reached.

The Postulate of Honesty.—It is appropriate to notice that we have to assume that all men are honest unless we are compelled to believe the contrary. Constantly in the study of religions there is evidence which might tempt us to infer that men were influenced by selfishness, hypocrisy, and low motives in general. It is always easier to attribute base motives and the like than to assume that men whose behaviour we cannot appreciate are as sincere as ourselves. It cuts the knots. But in research, and where thought is ordered, this solution of difficulties is to be repudiated. Such has been the ingenuity of forgers, the amount of error in copying texts, and the ease with which men gain false impressions, that research would make no progress if it relied upon facts of this kind when any difficulty appeared. It would be

¹ So, too, a *complete* estimate of religion takes into account the estimate both of the distinctly religious and of the uncompromisingly anti-religious opinions.

easy to argue that these documents were forged or fabricated, that these records of history were a valueless legend, and that these men upon whose testimony we rely were deluded or liars. Systematized and orderly thought would be annihilated, because, in place of a thorough-going credulity which can be corrected, we should have a thorough-going scepticism and "half-cleverness" which cannot be so readily dealt with. It is true that documents are forged, and that men are liars and hypocrites, but research is obliged to have a certain faith in its sources, and if suspicion arises, it must be tested. And this attitude of trust is normal, and fortunately so, since the attitude of research is akin to that of the progressive life. About the time of the French Revolution it was a common opinion that religion was a cunning invention due to the craft of rulers and priests. The view is psychologically wrong and does not explain the evidence, but it is an instructive illustration of the way in which current conditions and reflective thought are interwoven. Although we know that men are swayed by low or base motives, to suspect this too readily is disastrous. It would be as reasonable to suppose that politicians merely wished to gain votes and secure a salary, or that complex reforms were introduced for the benefit of lawyers. Implicit or explicit insinuations touching men of any age or area or class are dangerous because they so readily admit of being turned and applied to others. To see hypocrisy in religion leads to the discovery of hypocrisy among others who exercise any influence whatsoever; and it is as harmful a procedure as when one of two contending parties in encouraging unworthy sentiments of the other uses a weapon which the average individual employs in his own way. There are books—and not on religion alone—which are vitiated by faults of this type. They are detrimental to the environment in that they encourage the spread of mutual sus-

picion ; in attacking a section of life and thought, they attack the whole, and are anti-social. It must always be the preliminary assumption that the individuals who are our evidence for the study of religion were quite as well-meaning and conscientious, according to their own lights, as any of those of to-day who in any way seek to guide others.

Good outweighing evil.—Although the environment is more comprehensive than the individual, the individual who is at all progressive is aiming at a completer standpoint than that which he now holds. The present incompleteness makes itself felt in a variety of ways. For example, the love of the wonderful, the beautiful, and the sublime betokens some craving for a larger and fuller existence ; the promotion of any aspect of thought is for a greater completeness. Everywhere there is normally a feeling of something better than the present, of a path that leads to some desirable goal, of some greater satisfaction to which we are actually entitled. The Golden Age of the past is an instinctive feeling that guarantees a future happiness : the starting-point and the goal are one. We instinctively recoil from the unhappy ending in books, plays, or life. The rudimentary beliefs of a return whence one had come, and the contentment which even savages find in their supernatural beliefs and practices, confirm the normal character of a feeling which accounts for the ideas of a " good time coming," a better land, a millennium, and a Kingdom of Heaven. The ideas have outlived all vicissitudes which might seem calculated to destroy them, and, from rudimentary peoples upwards, disaster, catastrophe, and sin have been balanced by ideas of restoration, equilibrium, and renewed relationship with a benevolent Power and anticipation of a coming happiness. The instinctive feeling regarding the future is expressed by the individual in terms of the further development of himself, or of the environment with which he identifies himself. The subjective feeling is of funda-

mental importance; the confusion of the development of the individual and that of the environment is more secondary, but it emphasizes the underlying interconnexion between the living and those whom we call the dead. The point to notice is that the fundamental assumption of a possible greater completeness of life normally overrides the experience of disaster and the committal of error and wrong. If, as has been said, Nature never forgives, man at all events soon forgets, and the general practice has always been to find some adjustment and push onward. No laws can be laid down, whether or no there can be a "Will to Believe," there can be no "Will to Forget." It is an everyday fact that certain errors and offences appear to be readily forgotten, others—even of a distant past—force themselves to the surface persistently; here a murderer is said to go to the scaffold with a feeling of peace and reconciliation, and there an individual sends some trifling sum as "Conscience money" to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Whatever be the view of the environment, if it regards some as meticulous and is confident that others have no right to feel forgiven, it is from first to last the concern of the individual, his conscience and the development of his psychological nature.

Evil and error adjusted.—The frequent observation that error or offence leads to some adjustment and development in the environment recalls the fact that in departments of knowledge, although serious faults have been made, there is that which has adjusted and moderated their effect, so that the study has even gained a fuller experience than it would otherwise have had (p. 99). Grave historical errors of judgment, too, have seriously affected the area concerned, but once more their effect has been moderated and tempered, and the environment has pursued its way. The ideal of all ordered thought is to take advantage of its experience; but as a matter

of fact the same type of error is constantly being made, not the same error, but another of the same sort, and in another context or environment so that it is not so easily recognized. Now, whatever we think of any evil or error our attitude to it virtually sets up a standard, and the fairest procedure is to estimate it in the light of its surroundings. Where we can see that any error in the past was due to the limitations of the age, we shall be dealing fairly with the past, and this in fact is the estimate that we should hope for from those who in the future look back and see the errors in the life and thought of to-day. No age is without its faults, but our attitude to the past will influence that of the future to us. In order to make advance, our attitude must combine criticism with sympathy, else we make the fatal mistake of forgetting subsequent advances of thought, and certainly, unless a future age regards the present as its superior, it too will be critical, because it has developed further, though, as we naturally hope, it will combine with its judgment a certain sympathy for the difficulties which confront us. Thus the true historical spirit is "humanistic" when not explicitly "religious." Whatever our standpoint, the progress we ourselves have made is due (a) to a vast interconnexion of events and (b) to a development of consciousness capable of realizing this. If we hold some anti-religious standpoint and feel that we have gained a fuller measure of truth which religion only obscures, our advance will be due not only to these two causes, but also to the fact that we have evidence of a particular character.¹ The attitude unsympathetic towards religion will support itself by evidence which strengthens its own conviction of the greater superiority of the truth it possesses. If so, that attitude cannot but recognize the

¹ The reader must be reminded that here, as elsewhere, by religion is meant one with the distinctively "supernaturalistic" features that distinguish it from ethics or the cult of humanity.

value of the past through which it has so highly benefited, and, since it has already gained a measure of Truth, the more comprehensively the evidence is studied, the more complete will be its Truth. To be satisfied with that measure of Truth which it has already gained, is only to adopt that stationary and unprogressive attitude which it discovers and condemns in religion. Thus, if we hold a non-religious standpoint on rational grounds, it is only rational to realize the value of the evidence for the history of religion and, by deeper enquiry, to test and improve the standpoint we happen to hold at a certain period of the development of our consciousness.

Attributes of the Deity.—We can perceive that the environment is more comprehensive than any individual, and that the stage towards which every one is progressing will be less imperfect than the present. The conception of a more perfect standpoint and of the development of individual personality in a definite direction, is to be supplemented by the conviction, in religion, of a *Personal* Supernatural Supreme Power, far transcending, but in contact with, man. The relationship between Man and the Deity is expressed in accordance with man's feelings, experience, and knowledge; and the comparative study of religions is a study partly of the real experiences of individuals and groups, and partly of the reasoning based thereon.¹ We have already noticed that when current thought failed to appeal, there was a tendency to find an outlet in ways which satisfied the individual; and the evidence illustrates the fact that whatever we may think of the *form* which religion takes, there is this widely-distributed conviction of a Power whose *personal* sympathy and help can be enlisted, and to whose claims man must pay heed. Indeed, unless there were this

¹ So, elsewhere, we have a blend of direct or immediate evidence and that which is more derivative and theoretical; and the whole often tends to grow out of touch with experience.

conviction, the whole history of religion would be inexplicable. To take a single example, the widespread resort to the ordeal or to solemn oaths points to the more or less vague recognition of a Power that had a greater knowledge and might than was possessed by the group. The idea is not one to persist unless it represented an implicit or explicit belief in a Power interested in the welfare and preservation of the group, and with claims which could not be ignored. The Power is sympathetic, but it is not indiscriminately benevolent; the familiar view that religion arose from fear—that “fear first made the gods”—is a sufficient indication of the force of that evidence which showed that man must be heedful and cautious, and that he must regard his God with awe and reverence. In a word, throughout the course of religion there is attributed to the Supernatural Powers a combination of sympathy, discernment, and judgment. Whatever be the explanation, these are what we ourselves feel to be necessary for all progress, and we should trust that they would characterize any estimate passed upon us by a later and more advanced age than ours. But directly we recognize an existing, transcendent Power, we are implicitly formulating His attributes, as truly as the consideration of the relationship between different levels of consciousness raises the question of the relationship of a transcendent Mind to all mankind. In coming to realize what has been effective in past progress, we do not create, but we become conscious of facts. What has been implicitly justifying itself, we explicitly justify when we survey the past and understand the development. When the rudimentary ideas in some lowly or backward “level” are found to be in essential correspondence with those that reappear on the higher “levels,” we gain at once important evidence both for the psychical nature of man, and for the relationship subsisting between God, Man, and the Universe.

The significance of the just attitude.—The errors and evil we see around us this Supreme Power has seen. If the study of man shows us both good and bad, and enables us to understand how men were working out their own development, we gain a little more of the discernment which that Power has always had. If, too, a combination of sympathy and criticism allows us to adjudge the errors of the past more intelligently and kindly, we approximate an attitude which has been attributed intuitively to a Deity patient and slow to anger. Any recognition that there is a Supreme Power in the world means that He has had an insight immensely superior to that which we may be slowly gaining by a sympathetic and discriminating investigation of men psychologically like ourselves. By learning to know more of man we thus advance a step nearer to the knowledge of the Deity. The advance of research thus leads man, not only to see the past more as the Deity could see it, it brings him closer to the Deity Himself. Now, in studying the consciousness and what men have thought of the Supernatural and its relation to them, we are wont to adjudge the evidence with perfect freedom. The convictions entertained and the behaviour influenced thereby we estimate and criticize from our standpoint. We should all agree that those of old were right, who insisted that human sacrifice was not required by the gods; but our knowledge and attitude are incomplete unless we form a proper estimate of the fact that there had been a deeply-rooted conviction that such dreadful sacrifice was well-pleasing (p. 200 *seq.* above). The estimate we have would be applicable to any estimate of the present by a future age that found in us things to condemn. Our faults and the faults of the past need a similar type of explanation: on the one hand, in so far as they are in harmony with a certain stage of ethics and morals, they may be excusable; on the other hand, directly they are

recognized as faults, the same excuse cannot be made. On the one hand, the very knowledge that time heals and that the future adjusts might seem to encourage negligence or indifference ; but, on the other hand, the advance of consciousness brings with it a deepening sense of the responsibility of the individual (p. 316). Entirely characteristic of psychical evolution is personal responsibility ; for, whatever be the ultimate mysteries of human development the mind cannot conceive of a Supreme Principle, Power or Person, with attributes of indifference or arbitrariness, and a disregard of order.

The significance of the growth of knowledge.— If we say that development makes for the recognition of errors and for increase of Truth, we can agree, on the non-religious standpoint, that continued development will go hand in hand with further discovery of error and a fuller Truth. Everything rests upon our stage of development, and, accordingly, if we agree that a Supernatural Power has been revealing Himself according to the level of man, the higher our level, the profounder will be the knowledge. The humility of true philosophy and of true scholarship is the recognition of the littleness of man in a Universe the grandeur of which becomes overpowering as step by step a few of its secrets are discovered. Modern research has been reaching down to fundamental questions in psychology, biology, and physics ; man believes he is learning better how to utilize the Universe and to improve the race. That which in the past has been almost invariably bound up with ideas of the Supernatural is being gradually removed from this realm ; what has been associated with the working of the Supernatural has been transferred, as it were, into human hands ; there is a deeper realization of human possibilities and purposes, and of man's control of Nature. Only when one considers the tremendous antiquity of man, the slow development, and the relatively

sudden fruition in Western Europe during a few centuries, is the profound significance of the study of religions more appreciable. There has often been something awe-producing in knowledge, its acquisition has been an invasion of another world, and in a variety of forms we find the recognition that all good things come from the Supernatural Power, but that in gaining them man comes closer to it. Men, psychologically like ourselves, have felt an exceeding reverence, awe, and even danger, in the acquisition of new knowledge ; and even when, like the Psalmist, they have felt that all things were under man's feet, the superiority of man has been combined with the transcendence of a Supreme Power. Once we admit that there is a Supreme Power—however men may have formulated it—increase of knowledge is bringing us more closely to the One whose benevolence has been felt, whose claims have been recognized, and whose witnesses appear in all ages and lands. If, on the other hand, this Power does not enter into our calculations, this will arise, partly from that detached standpoint which does not perceive it is detached, and partly from a failure to realize that the convictions of the reality of this Power are as valid as those which sway the detached standpoint. But it is not the quantity of the knowledge, it is the synthesis, which makes man feel and realize certain fundamental principles in which the Self and its relations to a transcendent power are very intimately concerned. The purely rationalistic standpoint ignores that significant subconscious working which is wiser than itself, and as profound a fact there, as it is in those who recognize a Supernatural Power. Certainly, the detached standpoints add to the fulness of knowledge, but that tendency in thought, which accounts for the naturalism, materialism, and ultra-rationalism of the present day, may be the most gigantic error the world has ever seen ; yet may a more comprehensive standpoint

happily see that it is a *bona fide* one and that it is giving a greater fulness of experience to the progress of thought.

The downfall of areas.—The circumstances which seem to favour successful advance so readily seem to bring failure that there must be some subtler interconnexion of factors which are hardly recognized. Ikhnoton's wonderful reform has many features we can appreciate ; but Egypt was at a critical point of its history (p. 354). Strong and practical statesmanship was needed, but instead of a vigorous policy to bind together an empire and restore order, this young and rather effeminate king immersed himself in a philosophizing theology. Conditions were otherwise on the occasion of a great downfall some centuries earlier. During the " First Dynasty of Babylon," Elamite supremacy was overthrown, the empire consolidated, and Babylon suzerainty extended even to the Mediterranean. A great literary revival ensued, and this period of civilization and culture is especially striking for the famous code of laws of King Hammurabi, the discovery of which twelve years ago threw remarkable light upon the social and legal organization of about 2000 B.C. The code is conspicuous for its efforts to establish a coherent system of justice throughout the empire, and for the care taken on behalf of the people as a whole. But it came at a culminating point, and the new period so happily inaugurated was followed by invasion and general retrogression. Centuries elapsed before Babylonia again became independent. It is worth noting incidentally that the great code is more secular than religious, and thus stands in contrast to such systems as the Hebrew and the Mohammedan. But with the fall of the Dynasty, simpler conditions reappeared. In simpler societies the Supernatural is felt to be immediate, whereas, in those more advanced it is removed, as it were, by systems of beliefs and practices which ascribe to men of authority what had been bound up with the

Supernatural. When there is a weakening of organization supernaturalistic sanctions become stronger. The gods protect when the law of the land is disorganized or feeble: in other words, man finds his strength, not in the State, but in his inmost and profoundest ideas. And if at this time religious thought is disorganized, there will be a recrudescence of "superstition," and of features psychologically akin to religion, but without that intellectual and social authority which a living religion possesses. On the other hand, when religion retains its authority, we find, as in the medieval "Truce of God," an effort to counteract the weakness of the central secular power. Everything depends upon the interconnexion of thought. There is yet another period which strikes the imagination for its culture and brilliance, the Assyrian empire of the seventh century B.C. under Asshurbanipal. This ruler "gloried in the well-being of his faithful people. He pictured the blessings of abundant harvests and peaceful prosperity; in which he gloried almost as much as in the successes of his army. . . . He was a great builder . . . his chief claim to our respect is based on his patronage of learning and on his collections . . . our principal source for the literature of Assyria and Babylonia."¹ But this age of ease, indulgence, and learning comes at the end of the Assyrian empire; the conditions provided material for discovering the lessons of a past, but the age did or could not learn them. The royal library was arranged for easy consultation, and it is astonishing to see how wide were the interests; but Assyria fell and some of its stores now find a place with countless other memorials from the past in the research of to-day.

The strength of areas.—The vicissitudes of history in the lands of dead civilizations illustrate the fact that the interconnexion of causes that contribute to advance contribute also to decay. That link which binds an

¹ C. H. W. Johns, *Ancient Assyria*, pp. 147 sqq.

environment together and enables it to conquer or to withstand aggression is weakened and snapped ; the area falls to those whose solidarity is greater. From our various detached standpoints we select the factors for success or failure, but a comprehensive and impartial examination shows that no single factor is the sole contributing cause. It is something in the environment as a whole, something combining religion, politics, learning, social and all other activities. The detached standpoint allows us to sever rigidly any one from the rest, even as we can only place religion and politics, for example, in separate and distinct compartments simply because in our own consciousness these two appear to be quite distinct ; but the impossibility of maintaining this permanently is readily seen when religion is found normally to colour the whole body of thought or when politics or science concerns itself with that which strikes the profoundest side of life. Our survey will have been in vain unless we realize that the environment adjusts and modifies. What the environment does is that which happens when anything that makes for the movement of thought is discussed and criticized. The duty of criticism is then one of the most thankless of tasks, readily resented and misunderstood, and as thankless is the necessity of observing that those who make for movement readily tend to be one-sided and unfair to others. True, it is by this detachment that progress can be made, but if it makes for success, it makes also for failure, and the attitude of reformers regularly underestimates the sterling qualities of that to which they are opposed.¹ The strength of the area lies in its interconnexions, its solidarity, its consciousness of a corporate spirit. Conflicting opinion severs, convergence of opinion unites, and where there is

¹ In early Christianity there is an estimate of the Jewish law, one-sided and partial, but it became a tradition until the rise of modern biblical research.

no systematization of thought involving the deepest convictions, there is risk of danger, for upon these underlying feelings social integrity is based.

The interconnexion of areas.—Obsession is detrimental to any individual, but we cannot suppose that the most obsessed individual has reached the utmost limit of the development of his consciousness. In like manner, the movement that goes too far and seriously disturbs the environment, does not seem to inflict permanent disaster. The environment usually recovers itself, and perhaps one of the most interesting of enquiries is that of the impression it retains of earlier movements which appeared to be making for advance of civilization but failed. True, a kingdom or an empire may fall, but historical investigation compels us to consider the subsequent history of the social area affected. Consequently, the wider the interconnexion the further must we extend our survey of the sequel. We pass from Babylonia to Palestine, from Palestine to Europe, and thence to the civilization and culture of the whites. If by some chance modern civilization were to decay, the fact that it directly or indirectly influences the entire earth and that it has become international would make it the most stupendous failure in the history of man. But there is not the slightest reason to suppose that any subsequent retrogression would be keenly felt by the average man. Closely bound up though we are with the whole of mankind today, we scarcely realize the interconnexion, or understand that among other races thought is alert to the merits and demerits of the white man, his life, and his behaviour. Civilization has opened the eyes of other people, but it has hardly opened the eyes of the ordinary civilized man to the significance of these facts. Babylonia, Egypt, and Rome were each beneficial in their own way to the lands with which they came into contact, but their fall gave an opportunity for others to work out their own

development along their own lines. The new conditions which hold in the world to-day have yet to be realized by us; we have to discover that all are fellow-citizens of the whole earth. We have to reckon with the survival and persistence in civilized and uncivilized lands of attitudes to the Supernatural which outweigh all ideas into which the Supernatural does not enter, and whatever may be our aims for elevating levels which we deem inferior to our own, these attitudes are not to be ignored. *Herein is the link between them and us.*

The problem of different levels.—Research enables us to gain some idea of the enormous difference between prehistoric man and ourselves, but we are as unable to conceive progress culminating outside ourselves as the Babylonian or Roman could divine the trend of subsequent civilization. Whatever our standpoint, we recognize the working of Nature, Processes of Evolution, or the Hand of God, but since other levels than our own have benefited thereby, the enquirer will seek to understand the working of the "processes" which the present age more consciously endeavours to direct. Our schemes of intellectual, social, and religious reform are primarily to satisfy our own convictions, and are as sincerely meant as the campaigns of old; the plans of aggrandizement are now in the psychical sphere, the battles are fought for ideas. But God's ways are not man's ways, and Nature, or whatever name we use, has not always given the victory to the strong. Nor is there any reason to believe that all levels are being reduced to one. We cannot conceive the consciousness of the child being like that of the man, the child who is adult-like gives us no pleasure. It is the gap which is the charm and the stimulus. Whether we deal with children or with savages it is the gap which stimulates movement and ultimately enables us to understand ourselves better. We may feel that we are upon a higher level, but we have yet to

understand what this superiority involves; and when it is seriously asked to-day whether the lower races can be raised to a higher level of intellectual and moral capacity, the far more serious difficulty is to maintain our own. Even to aim at one's ideals is to advance. Everywhere the fundamental difficulty is to find the proper adjustment between two levels. A natural feeling prompts us to save our children the work and anxiety we have had, but everyday experience proves that in overcoming difficulties we gain a greater fulness of experience and strength of character. But the fight which is for the fruitful development of some is for the weakening of others; and the more we remove the opportunity which may be a danger to others the more difficult become some problems in the future. Opposition to war and all forms of suffering may be regarded as a right instinct, but it is gross folly to ignore the advantages that have accrued; and while enough has been said of the cruelty of Nature, it is wrong to overlook the harshness of intellectual conflict, the mangling of Truth, and the often cynical disregard of people's inmost convictions. If civilization has progressed in the physical and material sphere, our weapons for conflict in the world of thought are still lamentably imperfect, and we are at the mercy of the army of the "half-clever" and the "half-educated" until we come to recognize the difference between a "cleverness" and "brilliance" detached and specialistic, and that combination of intellectuality and sympathy which makes for wisdom and is peculiar to no class or race. Between the policy of *laissez faire* and an ignorant and tyrannical zeal which would—quite unconsciously—crush those who would work out their own development, there is a middle path which, if not found by the individual, is made by the environment. The "progressive" individual and the environment have each a desire for self-activity, and

when the self-consciousness is more keen, as to-day, the problems of compromise and adjustment become more serious, though not necessarily insoluble.

The psychical unrest.—The student of religions is bound to take notice of the world in which he lives ; he cannot ignore the great variety of types of mind and classes of individuals and peoples, each with particular convictions of what is needed. Here is material for his study ; here are examples of factors that have occasioned religious and other vicissitudes in the past. In the modern ideas of democracy the problems affecting the areas influenced by the white races cannot be kept apart from other features indicative of a new stage in the history of other races. There is an unprecedented confusion of aims making for connexion and disconnexion, characterized by a demand for a greater freedom, but placing the ideas of freedom each in a different context. Although this new stage is commonly regarded too narrowly from some social-political point of view, it is really much more comprehensive, and points to a very profound state of unsettlement which cannot be permanent. The study of religions, concerned as it is with the interplay of social and religious factors in human history, cannot disregard the unrest manifesting itself along the lines suggested by the environment. What we call the "labour unrest" is only a particular aspect of an unrest much more widely distributed, the study of which everywhere takes us down to the profounder side of the consciousness of individuals. Everywhere many individuals in many walks of life are taking part consciously or unconsciously in a movement which is commonly regarded as economical, social, political, or intellectual rather than religious. That in certain cases it is partly religious cannot be denied, that in others it is significant for religion can be said only if we detach religion from other aspects of thought.

The "people" and the environment.—By another process of detachment the unrest is viewed as a movement on the part of the "people," as though an environment could be divided into "the people" *plus* others. Now, in the varied departments of life any individual who can exercise influence over any group stands to it like a leader to the people. But not only does each need the other, there are intermediaries who link them together, and as long as there is a group all the members form a closely interconnected whole. Such is the interconnexion of life and thought that the same individual may be a leader in one respect, an intermediary in another, and one of the group in a third. The same man is usually a fraction of a unit in many respects, in one or more he has some particular gifts, while in several he comes between the few and the many. There is such interdependence that although a man may be attributed superiority for some thing which a group values, all men depend ultimately upon one another. This is most distinctly so in any department of the world of thought, while in society it is sometimes only by bitter experience that all the constituent classes have to learn how dependent they mutually are. Our ideas lead us to see inequalities and differences, but these have only a relative value or necessity, and only as regards particulars can we say that a philosopher is more "useful" than a publican or a member of parliament than a dustman. All are valuable and necessary in their special spheres; and the greater the power of doing good or evil, the greater their privilege, and their responsibility.¹ When we talk of "democracy" or of the "people" we mean all in the environment, we mean ourselves, unless by some process of detachment we sever ourselves from the rest. For

¹ "Unrest" is doubtless due partly to the fact that there is not a more general recognition of the indebtedness of the whole environment to every one of the constituent parts.

purposes of organization an environment or a unit-group may have subdivisions, but no unit can be regarded as a whole unless we include all its constituent members. For various reasons we may talk of the upper, middle, and lower classes, but in a complex society this division has only relative value ; and if when we talk of " the people " we do not include ourselves, we should save much irrelevant discussion by specifying clearly who are the *people* and who *we* are. The fact is, that the same sort of problem occurs whenever there is the conscious feeling of superiority, and the equally conscious feeling that one is regarded as inferior. The problem of " psychical levels " and of co-ordination of groups (cf. p. 284 *seq.*) concerns separate areas or countries, and equally also the relations among peoples and races over the whole earth ; and it is unlikely that the solutions will be widely different.

Unity and religion.—In rudimentary societies there are visible differences within the group, but no coherent body can be regarded as a group *plus* any individual or individuals. What is more important, in such groups the members are united by supernatural beliefs which are focused upon their god or gods ; so that instead of saying that a group is linked by the feeling of a common corporate spirit, we may say that the link joining all involves the supernatural. It is true that we soon find differentiation within the group, but it is very noteworthy that both the group and the beliefs of the supernatural are affected at the same time. The absence of equilibrium in society and that among the supernatural ideas occur together, and thought, in detaching some individuals from others, makes a detachment in its conceptions of the supernatural. An illustration of this is the development when the ruler, as representative of the Supernatural Power, becomes isolated, as it were, from the people, and the Supernatural Power itself is regarded as remote. In

lower as in higher levels when the environment feels its oneness and solidarity most keenly it is animated by common ideas of the Supernatural. Conversely, when a new stage is inaugurated in religion, it has tended to unite its adherents, irrespective of nationality, class, or intelligence. Both the keen feeling of solidarity and the fervent religious conviction concern the profounder side of the consciousness. When a number of individuals are aroused they tend to become as one; and the psychological study of the crowd has shown that in states of excitement and enthusiasm, distinctive individuality is dropped, and a psychical interconnexion reveals itself as the crowd form one whole with some temporary leader or guide. It has already been remarked that all reformers are characterized by a desire to give equilibrium, coherence, and oneness to the groups to whom they appeal, and this feature only emphasizes the view that there is an instinct in man of an interconnexion with his race which only needs stimulation and expression.

The fundamental realities.—Do what we may, the future adjusts; argue as we will, we cannot thwart or coerce the profounder side of the consciousness with its instinct of interconnexion and continuity which may be temporarily obscured (see p. 344 n.). The insistence upon a continuity with the past marks law, history, and religion; the scientific study of psychology merges into ethics, and the science of good and healthy living overlaps with religion. Hostility to the new characterizes all normal individuals—even those who might pique themselves on the freshness of their standpoints; but how often the new is only the old in a new form, and the inferences from reflexion only a repetition of the intuitions or convictions of the past! The individual who finds his deepest strength for all his progressive aims in his own consciousness has a total body of thought which, even if it does not include convictions of the

Divine, contains his profoundest valués. Where we find a group welded together, its coherence depends upon a corporate spirit, and this, in the history of thought, involves supernatural beliefs. In either case we come down to the remoter parts of the consciousness, to factors which lie outside ordinary enquiry, but are fundamental for intellectual, social, moral, and religious progress. On this account, anything that in any way throws light upon these mysteries is valuable, and not for religion alone. For purposes of research, the attitude of the child, the artist, the poet, the labourer, or the savage to the world around them is important for us ; and the more so, since we are inevitably hampered by our inability to divest ourselves of the ideas which have grown up with us. Every one sees things through his own telescope, as it were ; but every one brings his contribution, and enables us in some degree to perceive that man has found some Reality in the Universe, something immensely wonderful and grand and helpful and terrible. All, with their outlooks and experiences, are throwing some light upon Man and the Universe, and consequently, in endeavouring to understand something of the deepest cravings of mankind, we are not only promoting the specialistic study of religions, we are also ascertaining something of the common consciousness of all men, and of the means by which one mind has influenced and can best influence another, and how a Supreme Mind has worked upon Man.

The Comparative and Historical Methods of Research. — The *comparative* method of dealing with religions collects and classifies the accessible beliefs and practices, while the *historical* method concerns itself more directly with their vicissitudes and development. Modern ideas of evolution lead us to look for genetic stages in the history of religion ; but, owing to the absence of the

earliest evidence, the results must be somewhat provisional, and they must be checked by observing that the comparative method allows us to look for modern representatives of these stages. In organic evolution we can conceive stages connecting the simplest and earliest form, A, with the most highly developed, Z. But we do not have them around us. The simplest existing form of life is already complex, and the lowest savages are very different from primitive, prehistoric men. We have typical transitions, but not the actual transitions which in the remote past culminated in the advent of man. So, too, in psychical evolution we can be sure that there has been a very profound development; and we have abundant examples of development and transition. But if the most rudimentary of savage tribes represents A, what shall be our Z? The highest stage is that suggested by *our* convictions and ideals; and people differ among themselves as to whether that stage will be characteristically non-supernaturalistic, or, if religious, what religion it will be (cf. p. 8, n. 1). In any case, however, the evolution of thought in this way converges with our own psychical development; or, to put it otherwise, our conceptions of its evolution are not severed from our conscious and subconscious ideas of ourselves.

The Fundamental Psychical Similarity.—It is disputed whether the psychical development of every individual has parallels in that of the race (see p. 54). If we hold the theory that an age of "Religion" was preceded by that of "Magic"—its hated rival and opponent—there is no obvious parallelism, and the problems are more difficult. On the other hand, any theory that psychical development and transition in the history of the race cannot be very different from that in individuals enables us to test the one enquiry by the other. In this way, we co-ordinate the problem of the development of beliefs and practices and that of the psychical develop-

ment of the individual. Consequently, the enquiry into such a question as the priority of "Magic" in remote times, though speculative, is of value for its bearing upon questions that touch us more directly. Similarly, the enquiry into the origin of religion, though necessarily speculative, is significant for modern problems. This enquiry often slurs over very important preliminary questions. When it is suggested that religion began with the worship of the dead, we must ask, What is worship, if it does not imply something religious? and why should the dead be revered? Questions of feeling and respect for personality are involved. So, also, if religion began with a Divine Revelation or with a belief in a Supreme Being, we use religious concepts to explain the introduction of religion itself! We inevitably raise problems of the consciousness and of the development of ideas of personality—problems which can be handled psychologically and contribute immediately to the psychology of religion. And it is to be observed that we all, without exception, implicitly assume that the psychical nature of mankind has always been and always is fundamentally alike, so that notwithstanding profound differences of belief and behaviour, there is some essential similarity somewhere. Though every enquiry into the origin of religion is speculative, we are none the less gaining valuable evidence and are learning more of the religious nature of ourselves and others. In distinguishing the general psychical nature of man from his particular beliefs and practices, we realize more distinctly that if man has been capable of profound advance, further advance is not impossible. On the other hand, there are limits, and these are doubtless determined by the psychical nature of man.

The adjustment of levels.—Whether we consider the evolution of beliefs and behaviour in human history, or attend to the points of resemblance, we reach the conclusion that the numerous "levels" of thought are not

essentially so widely severed as we sometimes imagine. Because the child's consciousness is fundamentally like ours we can influence and guide its growth ; and so, too, because of the psychical similarity of all men, there is theoretically an equal possibility of exercising a beneficent influence over the most rudimentary of races. The problems of education, government, and daily life are those of adjusting one level to another, of finding the attitude for allowing useful development for the good of the groups or environments concerned. The attitude is found experimentally. Only experience shows that by weakening the supernatural beliefs of some environments the social system is weakened, or that by enforcing our ideas and impeding individuality we awaken resentment here and produce apathy there. The desire to reform, lead, and elevate is for the gaining of a greater coherence ; this aim consciously or unconsciously impels those who undertake any individualistic activity, even though the environment is not immediately concerned. But it is one thing to seek to adjust others to our own basis, it is quite another to elevate them upon their own ; the first is a development along our lines, the latter is one along their own. The more we are impressed by the genetic movement of thought in an environment, the more obvious the necessity of striving to elevate its inherited possessions ; and this one can scarcely do unless one diligently observes the characteristic features of progress in the past.

The new history.—The unrest of the present day is characterized by conflicting ideals, some for separation, exclusivism, and self-advancement, others for larger interconnexion, beyond current groupings. But the history of any group, environment, or area is only part of a larger history, even as its thought cannot be disconnected and viewed by itself ; and that attitude which every individual has to find to his environment is that which every environment or area has to find to its neighbours. And even

as every individual has to find some attitude to the Universe, so the problems of any single area are only part of the problems which concern the relationship between all mankind and the Supernatural. All history shows unambiguously that any conviction an area has had of its superiority in the world held good only for a short time, and the area which had the conviction that it was the chosen instrument of a Supreme Power had to learn that this Power was stronger than it. The God of any one area is not distinct from the God of another, and only from a relatively narrow standpoint could it be supposed that the interest of a Supernatural Power was confined to those who felt that they stood in the closest relationship to it. The history of an area is only part of the profounder history of the Universe, and modern research is paving the way for the adjustment of ideas which this fact involves. The adjustment is not necessarily so impossible as it might seem. It is true that the possession of a national or religious tradition controls our attitude to development, and this is illustrated by the common tendency for the new to become assimilated to the old, and by the opposition to that criticism of the Bible which weakens or destroys any portion of its historical background. The importance of this background is felt partly by those who value the Bible solely on religious grounds, and partly by those to whom ancient history is a field of research. The vital importance of its traditional background, however, is not felt by all alike. We ourselves do not usually insist upon strict historical accuracy in other things that appeal to us—in drama, pictures, poetry, for example—and there is little doubt that by a sort of pseudo-critical rationalism too much insistence has unfortunately too often been laid upon the literal historical accuracy of the Bible. History appeals to us because it links us with the past, and satisfies that instinctive desire to find an interconnexion and continuity.

But the history in question is that which we have assimilated from our childhood. The essential underlying feeling must have an embodiment, but the embodiment can be analytically severed from the essence. Now, from the criticism of the Old Testament it is clear that the historical traditions of certain groups were adopted by a larger environment.¹ Immigrants will often identify themselves with the traditions of the new land wherein they settle, and the mixed Samaritans were wont to claim a historical background or perspective to which they had no real right. The comparative study of history proves that, not only are there significant developments in the religion or thought of areas, but even the traditions of interconnexion and continuity can be readjusted or reshaped.

The individual and his history.—In the progress of Christianity in Western Europe the book of Genesis with its own account of the earliest history of man was so firmly accepted, that, not only did it form the starting-point for universal history, but ancestries were freely traced back to the sons of Noah and earlier to Adam. Even to-day there persists a feeling that there must be *some* historical truth underlying the chapters, and this feeling may probably be regarded as indicative of that craving to co-ordinate the profoundest aspirations with the history of the Universe. There is a relationship between a man's religion and the expression of his instinctive feeling of a continuity with the past. The history and the religion of the individual, the group, and the nation are interwoven, and if the biblical history associates man and the Divine, it corresponds to the traditions of many peoples who have felt or craved a similar interconnexion.² It corresponds to those significant feelings, intuitions, or

¹ Our ideas of early Israelite or Hebrew history correspond to those of certain groups, and ignore some evidence which show that other groups had a different perspective; cf. above, p. 203 n.

² See above, pp. 340 *sqq.*

convictions of a Golden Age, of a happier future, of goals that are starting-points—ideas which are realities in individual experience and cannot be argued away. It is true that modern research is destroying the way in which these underlying feelings have been expressed. The historical value of the early chapters of Genesis disappears; archaeology, geology, and biology are revealing an antiquity of man so immense that a continuous historical thread is not to be expected. But there is also a building-up—the katabolism is balanced by an anabolism—the old comes back and with a newer value, and modern research is slowly giving us a vaster and profounder history of the past. This newer history of the Universe is linking together all men and all religions; it is replacing earlier, more particularistic, exclusive, and uncritical histories by a universal one. The history of each and every individual is being linked in that marvellous evolution which, in the organic world, culminates in man, and in the psychical realm reaches to heights which we cannot conceive. Man has dared many things in his time, but nothing is grander than the repeated conviction of Something very close but immeasurably transcendent, very benevolent and tender but very searching, Something with which man was bound up from birth to death, the starting-point and the goal of his activities. The relationship between man and the Unseen, which peoples have expressed each in their own way, appears to be broken only when we so objectify our ideas that we confuse the experiences of mankind with the form in which they have expressed them. This is to ignore their underlying similarity and our own imperfections of thought, and the more we are led to realize the fundamental oneness of the consciousness of man the more indispensable to consider its significance for our attitude to the Universe.

The new spirit.—The developments which have been beneficial in life and thought have been characterized by

a new spirit which gave impetus and stimulus to the movement ; the problems remained, or they took some new form, but they were approached in a new light and with better methods.¹ The development of the consciousness means little to us if it is not a guarantee that mind can cope with the hardest and most disquieting problems of which it has come to be aware ; and the study of religions fails if it does not show us that men have found in the Universe a Power which helped them to work out their lives. It is precisely at a time like the present, when there is the keenest self-consciousness and " Will to Do," that upon the relationship to the Unseen rest the results of endeavour. The interconnexions and interrelations all the world over to-day are so vast, and the fundamental oneness of man's attitude towards the Supernatural so striking, that there is the possibility of establishing a coherence and an equilibrium so unprecedented that one cannot conceive its result. But at the same time so heterogeneous are the outward forms, so conflicting the expressions of the conscious and unconscious cravings, that there is the possibility of an incoherence and confusion, the result of which it is equally impossible to imagine. It is at least perfectly certain that existing psychical conditions cannot be permanent ; the slow movement of thought overcomes all efforts to stop it, it can be guided, it cannot be impeded or forced. It is not a blind, mechanical process, it is the result of innumerable individuals seeking to find an outlet for their inmost desires, and their activities involve the mysteries of the consciousness, and those factors which belong to the Supernatural and the Unseen.

Failure concerns only parts.—The future alone will show whether man's efforts will be attended with failure or success. While individuals have intuitive feelings of confidence and optimism, retrospect proves that

¹ See above, p. 314.

these feelings do not in any way guarantee a successful issue for their environment. On the other hand, they are immensely valuable for the psychical nature of man, and retrospect shows very clearly that failure belongs only to parts. Failure marks certain events, episodes, and stages; failure is found only where we take short and incomplete views. Ignorant though we are of the future, retrospect justifies the intuitive feeling that, though failure applies to parts, success will belong to the whole; that pessimism is a temporary phase, but optimism is "structural." We cannot conceive an ideally complete state of equilibrium (pp. 90 *seq.*); our feelings and ideas of permanent good pertain to the skeletons, frameworks, or structures of things, and not to the things themselves as we find them, to the essential and not to the transient, and to the spirit of endeavour and not to the field of activity. It is this "structural" part of ourselves of which we become conscious. There is that which is "divine" in man, though he sometimes tends unwarrantably to confuse the part with the whole—so far as he can conceive the whole (cf. p. 353 *seq.*). Everywhere there is the risk of confusing the spirit with the letter, the kernel with the shell, and the essential with the non-essential.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION—SOME FEATURES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THOUGHT

I. THE Study of Religions has brought to light remarkable differences and no less remarkable resemblances among the religious and other aspects of life and thought all the world over. A great deal of attention has been paid to the one or to the other of the two groups of features, but the effort must be made to co-ordinate both. The work of comparison and co-ordination emphasizes the importance of certain fundamental problems. Such are the problems of the underlying resemblances and of the underlying differences ; the problems of the development of thought, of the more permanent underlying the more variable, the nature and significance of the permanent and the limits of variability ; the paradoxical problems of (a) the profound difference between the " religious " and all that is " non-religious," and (b) the absence of an absolute difference ; the problems of the psychical aspects of man and the particular beliefs and behaviour which characterize his body of thought. To a rather summary outline of some considerations arising out of the preceding this concluding chapter will be devoted.¹

II. (a) New data, if they are not meaningless, associate themselves with some portion of our current stock of

¹ Attention may be directed, for fuller references, to the more important headings in the Index.

experience and knowledge. The new datum (*e.g.* aeroplane, a new star, etc.) can be viewed analytically, as made up of something with which we are already familiar, and something which enables us to distinguish it from other data with which it might otherwise be identified or confused. If we say the datum, $D = \iota + d$, then every new datum that has a meaning for us implies a fusion of what we already knew (ι), and that which distinguishes (d) this particular D . The analysis need not be made consciously and explicitly, $\iota + d$ are a "whole," and implicitly ι is the context associating D with our current experience and knowledge, and d can be viewed separately as that which denotes the novel, distinctive, and differentiating features.

(*b*) In like manner, when we compare or in any way associate two or more data, X, Y, Z , these may be viewed analytically as consisting of ι , that which they share in common, and x, y, z , the distinctive features, such that $\iota + x = X$ and not Y , and Y differs from Z in that, though it shares ι , it has the features y and not z . When we in any way compare, say, a priest and a poet, both have something in common (*e.g.* they are living human things, etc. etc.); but they differ in all those features that distinguish one from the other. In dealing with data, everywhere $D = \iota + d$, but we do not explicitly analyse unless we have to consider the points of resemblance and of difference.¹

III. If certain beliefs and practices (X, Y, Z) resemble each other externally, the points of resemblance (ι) do not allow the inference that the feelings and convictions that accompany them (x, y, z) are necessarily identical. The "psychical accompaniment" may differ in kind or in degree (see p. 181, n. 1). Again, the same underlying feeling or conviction (ι) will often have quite different

¹ Instead of treating A as differing from B in a , or B as differing from A in b , it is more useful to mark off the features in common (ι) and those peculiar to each (a and b).

external forms of expression, so much so that X and Y (e.g. the veneration of saints and modern hero-worship) will appear absolutely distinct, because of the difference between the x and the y . The two phenomena ($\iota + x$ and $\iota + y$) are a "whole" in experience, but psychological analysis applies the "comparative method," not to the externals but to the underlying features, and finds a similar type of feeling expressing itself in two externally different ways. The necessity and utility of this analysis have perhaps been sufficiently illustrated in the chapters on "Survivals." A new class of problems now arises. If certain feelings, convictions, and the rest (ι) manifest themselves in some particular external manner (e), can we have an ι without an e , or an e without its ι , the "psychical accompaniment"? Now ι can be very faint or slight, it may come in only when stimulated, it seems to hover on the border-line of consciousness; it is there only when we recognize it (see p. 181, n. 1). Obviously, it is impossible to deny the existence of that of which we are absolutely unconscious, and consequently the question of ι without e can hardly be discussed. On the other hand, if we consider a number of typical cases ranging from the purely "mechanical," "automatic," or "unreflective," to the distinctly deliberative and conscious, we should have a series extending from the apparent entire absence of ι to its presence in varying degrees of intensity. Thus, ι would come in suddenly and abruptly where we recognized a "psychical accompaniment," and this suddenness or abruptness requires attention.

IV. Data can be viewed together or "contiguously."¹ In some respects the man and the ape, and in other respects a loaf and a cake, have much in common. If we call these M, A, L, and C, after the initial letters, then

¹ Consider, e.g., school, reformatory, prison, monastery, etc., and the ideas involved in them when taken separately, or together in any combination.

M and A have features ι in common and differ as regards the differentiating features m and a ; in like manner we can write $L = \iota + l$ and $C = \iota + c$. But ι in M and A is not the same as ι in L and C. Yet, if L and C represent "lion" and "cat," we can easily imagine an ι common to all four, though it would differ from the ι common to any two or three. In any datum, $\iota + d$ are constant, but the precise meaning of ι varies according to the data that are combined. And as ι varies so will d .¹ If, now, we imagine the data to be not "contiguous," but "continuous" (*e.g.* baby, child, man), we can proceed to deal with what can be viewed as continuing, developing, or evolving.

V. (a) The "continuous" data may be divided or marked off by internal distinctive changes or by external periods (*e.g.* time-division). Here the study of history is very suggestive. If, for example, we take the French Revolution (or any other "datum" that can be viewed as developing), we first implicitly or explicitly sever it from its natural context; we treat as a "whole" a certain selection of relevant details, much in the same way that our terms embody parcels of relevant data taken from their context. In each case we reject that which seems to be irrelevant, and there is a tendency to ignore the points of resemblance between the datum and what is "contiguous" or "continuous" with it. In history weight is laid upon events and landmarks, and the inter-connexion between the "before" and "after" is often overlooked; stages are severed too cleanly and the true sequence and relationship are thus often obscured.²

¹ If we take the three terms, man, tiger, cat ($\iota + m$, $\iota + t$, $\iota + c$), since the features shared by all are not precisely the same as those shared by any two, the complementary features must vary. If ι = living thing, then t describes the tiger, but if ι links the tiger and the cat then both ι and t are now differently formulated. If we desired to associate the three with others, we could, if necessary, distinguish the ι^1 common to two or three, from the ι^2 common to more, and the ι^3 (or, say, ι^n) common to all. Cf. also below, § XXV.

² Cf. generally, pp. 313 *sqq.*, 326 *sqq.*, 341, 346.

(b) Next, the French Revolution naturally "began" and "ended." In determining these limits we shall be guided by our conception of the datum, for all things are recognized through our notion of their contents and confines. But the development "began" in the midst of certain conditions in France and Western Europe, such that we soon perceive that it did not "begin" suddenly or "abruptly." In like manner it "ended" or "died" in the midst of other conditions. Our developing datum is from first to last a part of a larger whole developing in the midst of a larger development.¹ When the Revolution ceased—and we shall be guided by our view as to when it *did* cease—we merely pass from the "part" to a larger "whole." And similarly, the development of France or of Western Europe could be viewed as that of a still larger whole. The ultimate unit, environment, or whole will be the Universe—the whole of which all things are part. *This* is an ideal whole, and consequently the Universe cannot be said to develop (see p. 423).

VI. The D that can be viewed as developing or evolving is something "picked out" from its context. It begins where we first recognize it, *according to our conception of it*. If we trace back a study or a department of thought, not only is it at every point an integral part of the world of thought, but it "begins" as an integral and indivisible part of some larger whole (see pp. 81, 107). Consequently, when we pass from the part to its context we often get an apparent discontinuity, *e.g.* the "death" of the French Revolution takes us once more to the "environment," France or Western Europe, and the rise or "birth" of the latter leads us to consider, either a geographical area, or the history of all civilization, involving Greece and the East. Development and evolution apply to parts. The relevant details are selected and abstracted, implicitly or explicitly; we are not consciously aware that

¹ Cf. above, pp. 81 (and note), 110 n.

by "French Revolution" we name a body of details which, although physical and material details are included, are characteristically mental or psychical. Furthermore, development, in history and thought, is not concrete but abstract; we abstract, seize, and view as a development certain details which form more or less synthetic bodies, units or wholes. If, on the other hand, organic evolution seems essentially concrete and perceptual, none the less, although some obvious details are grasped intuitively, everything depends upon the way in which the sense-given data are viewed. In the world of thought the development rests upon innumerable transient individuals, they are the concrete representatives, and the history of Darwinism—not to mention more recent events—has shown how largely conceptions of development and evolution are bound up with temperament, prejudice, or bias, and "ways of thinking." Even the percept requires an appropriate and relevant interpretation which is given to it only by experience and thought (cf. pp. 51 *sqq.*).

VII. Every D that can be viewed as continuing or developing has at every stage an antecedent stage, where we may find earlier antecedent conditions and possibly an earlier form of D itself. Everywhere, D is only a part of a larger whole, it has an appropriate context or environment, a background which preceded, and is older than, the first appearance of D. Now, when there is any development there is a tendency to mark off different stages in such a way that we emphasize the distinctive differences and obscure the resemblances. At the same time, other differences that make their appearance between these two stages are unnoticed. When it is thought that Western Europe was sunk in ignorance until the "Revival of Learning," the admitted development in learning is allowed to overshadow earlier advances which were of no mean order; and often in the growth of children there are examples of different grades and rates

of development, and on the part of the elders an inability to recognize development or a tendency to overestimate it. When we mark off the individual, and speak of the baby, child, youth, adult, and the old man, we can see how naturally development may demand a developing terminology. On the other hand, when the term remains the same, care has to be taken to see that its meaning has not undergone development, and that it means what we understand it to mean. In fine, when there is development, when things can be viewed as varying or developing, the tendency is to exaggerate differences or resemblances, or to fail to see them, and as a characteristic result there is a "suddenness" or "abruptness" in things, which is due more to our nature than to any intrinsic reason. It constantly happens that we *suddenly* become aware of differences, of change in conditions, or of novelties, although the development has been gradual, orderly, and regular.¹

VIII. (a) Every D that develops has an antecedent *stage*—the "pre-D" stage—but not necessarily also an earlier *form* of D. If Religion can be said to develop, the most rudimentary stage where we can recognize it has a necessary antecedent: either there will be features which, as in the case of Totemism, represent a primitive type of Religion, or not, *according to our conceptions of Religion*, or the features in that stage will be the necessary prelude to the "birth" or "dawn" of Religion. So, also, if

¹ This is a well-known fact in psychology. When a stimulus is applied it is felt only when it reaches a certain intensity, and when there is a regular increase of intensity the difference is not felt at every increase, but only after certain intervals. Continuation and development are not really apprehended as they actually occur; we are like the minute-hand in those large clocks which only register time by minutes, and not second by second. Although, as a consequence, we do not seem to apprehend "reality" as it exists, it does not follow that an ability to see things as they actually develop would give us a greater "reality." Certainly, the advance of man has been by deliberation and reflexion, and this involves selection and detachment—partial aspects (cf. p. 295, n. 1; and see Index, s.v. "Selection").

man's conceptions of God have developed, we can look for the stage where, though there may not be the ideas of God, *as we formulate them*, there will be features, the antecedent of those where the notion of a Deity first appears. Neither "Religion" nor "God" could appear suddenly or abruptly in the development of thought: the very individuals who are the concrete representatives, and by whom we must check all theories, would reflect a development where all that which goes to make up what we understand by these terms would be part of a larger context, the whole of which obviously would not undergo any sudden or abrupt change. The existence of a pre-D stage, then, is of exceptional interest when, as in the cases mentioned, one is stimulated to examine one's own conceptions more carefully in order to understand their dynamic aspects.

(b) When we speak of the development of Science or of Art we are guided by our preliminary conceptions. Savages are often "scientific" and "artistic" in certain respects; their theories and explanations will border on the one, the decoration of their pottery, etc., is often the latter. But detachment and specialized experience are wanting, and it would be misleading to say that science and art flourish in their midst. There is a stage where features are "scientific" and "artistic," but these terms are premature so long as the conditions of life and thought do not permit us to recognize Science and Art *as we must define them in their own interest*. Now, at the present day, we have many differentiated aspects of life and thought, but if we consider scientists, artists, scholars, and the rest, we find that they are readily influenced by considerations which are not of their special department, or by ideas which are vague, complex, or undifferentiated. A man will work for the love of his work, for a livelihood, for a position, to win some one's esteem, and so forth; the special individual (*e.g.* the scholar or artist) is now

responsible for unscholarly and inartistic work, and is now swayed by considerations apart from pure art and scholarship. None the less, the terms serve a purpose, they indicate the characteristic, distinctive, and essential. Art, science, scholarship, etc., are, and will be what they are, only so long as they are vitalized by a spirit somewhat indefinable and ideal. When men decorated their pottery purely for the love of the decoration, Art came in, but it was implicit before it was explicit, and it dies when the animating spirit leaves it. Our terms have a somewhat ideal character, but they are meant to be practical, and they have in view the future. They have also a sort of personal significance, and this fact betrays itself when one defines, *e.g.*, Religion.¹ First implicit, the new growths become explicit, and when consciously recognized, and then more objectively viewed, there is a crisis in their history.

IX. The stage prior to the appearance of any distinctive feature is logically pre-X, rather than non-X. Fishes are not "non-religious," and crystals are not "non-moral"; the non-X is applicable where X is relevant, it applies to some A which can be subdivided into the X and the non-X.² Hence the necessity of determining the "A," whatever it may be. The question whether firs and mosses are "intelligent" is hardly relevant; on the other hand, there are many very difficult cases where all depends upon our definitions and the "pre" stage of that to which they refer. The term "intellect" is hardly applicable to very young children or to animals; logically, however, in the evolution of thought we expect a "pre-intellectual" stage. But the real problem is to under-

¹ So, too, notions of evolution have a personal tinge. It is the *feeling* of culmination, superiority, and so forth, which gives the energy, momentum, and *élan*.

² Otherwise the non-X becomes absolutely indefinite, infinite, and useless for logical science; cf. Prof. W. R. B. Gibson, *The Problem of Logic* (1908), p. 48 *seq.*

stand the "thought" of all earlier stages. The fact is that where things can be viewed as developing, the changes which are relatively slight when we compare contiguous stages become very striking when the stages are more remote. The difference between babies and adults or between tadpoles and frogs is the more striking because we ignore all the intervening stages. What is applicable to contiguous stages is not always so when the stages are apart. Our own growth and development furnish conspicuous examples of genetic development, with wide gaps when we ignore intervening stages, with the appearance of apparently novel features that must have a "pre" stage, features that after a time change or disappear, and, with all this, a development of methods and principles from the most rudimentary and undifferentiated stage onward. The differences illustrated in this growth find an analogy when, instead of the difficulty of comprehending a stage other than the present, we observe the difficulty of interpreting or expressing what is at a level different from ours. Of this we have examples in the interpretation of "play" and in the ordinary "rationalistic" attitude to other levels.¹

X. (a) Every transition from non-X to X refers properly to that wherein X is relevant. The transitions from anger to sorrow, or from joy to grief, involve changes in the stages of individual history; when atheism becomes theism, we mean that atheists become theists, and we refer once more to particular stages in a development. Magic could hardly "develop" into Religion, its rival, but we can endeavour to understand the mentality of individuals who, instead of furnishing the evidence which we include under the former term, provide "religious" material. And this psychological treatment will enable one to test and check those theories which use the

¹ Cf. pp. 18, n. 1, 31 n., 267.

terms without constant reference to ordinary human experience.¹

(b) When the last straw is said to break the camel's back the "catastrophic" change is not due to the fact that the $n+1$ th straw has made the load heavier than the n th, and too heavy, but to a cumulative effect, or rather, to many considerations quite apart from the numerical difference between the n th and the $n+1$ th straw. Profound and sweeping changes to a greater or less degree are common in life. When a man comes of age, there are significant differences, not because 21 is intrinsically more significant than 20 and 22, but because of the ideas and customs associated with the twenty-first birthday.² Though incomes may vary from £100 to £10,000, at sundry points there are serious and sudden changes, from the point of view of the Inland Revenue authorities. If we imagine a scale extending from rich to poor, good to bad, and truth to lie, there will be cases (a) where people will differ in their estimate, and (b) where the line between the two will be drawn "suddenly" and arbitrarily. In other words, there will be very significant differences, the variation will be in some degree abrupt, sudden, or even arbitrary, and the difference between an X and a Y will rest not in the case itself but in the context, the ideas surrounding the concrete cases, the observer's body of thought, current opinion, and the environment.³

¹ Here it can be noticed that when X becomes Y (e.g. atheism and theism, or the like), we tend to confuse individual development with that in the world of thought. Atheists may become theists, but some "pre-theist" stages were such that ideas of theism or atheism were irrelevant.

² Here, too, we get an obscuring of points of resemblance between the before and the after, and an accumulation of various features at a single point not for any intrinsic reason of their own. Cf. p. 395 n. 2 (references).

³ The change in the relations, the disturbance of equilibrium, and the general discontinuity, find a mathematical analogy in the "discontinuous function" (e.g., $xy=1$) where, notwithstanding the orderly and regular development, there is a sudden graphic break that seems in every way absolute.

XI. (a) The discontinuity or abruptness is especially noteworthy when we contrast (s) the sacred, holy, divine, profound, and the like, and (c) the common, ordinary, secular, and all that is not s. But it is very difficult to formulate the objective difference between s and c. Opinion varies everywhere: it is influenced by feelings, convictions, and conventions, etc., standards are nowhere the same; yet all will agree that they are aware of a very real and distinct difference between *what to them* is s and the residuum c. The difference involves individual experience, it is a subjective fact, but the subjectively valid difference has no objective validity, because individuals and groups vary. The validity concerns individuals but not beliefs and practices; the individuals continue to feel the difference, but do not usually realize that their own attitudes and body of beliefs and practices undergo change and development. s and c do not mark absolutely separated water-tight compartments, they influence each other; but the individual always feels between them a very distinct gap of vital importance for his life-history.

(b) Further, with s may be connected the profounder and deeper sides of life. We do not necessarily have here what is "religious," the features may be characteristically ethical or social, or focused upon one's work or relationships. In any case, here is what is of intensely *personal* significance, whether the *object* itself be personal or not; and if religion is not comprised, there is what corresponds to religion in the religious. Now, there is no absolute gap between religion and certain aspects of music, art, literature, and other "non-religious" things; and individuals differ widely as regards what belongs to the religious and what to the non-religious. But all will agree in severing the profound from the not-profound. The profound sides are intensely important for the self, but they are variously religious and non-religious, and they are not necessarily

good or elevated or beneficial. Everywhere individuals may make their own distinctions, but viewed objectively there is something psychically similar, an intenser aspect of the self (*ι*), underlying very different external forms of expression (*e*) which vary considerably in degree.¹

XII. The individual is a transient part of some larger whole. Like the French Revolution in the history of Western Europe, he can be viewed as undergoing development (§ V.), but his origin takes us back to a larger whole, and he tends to regard himself as part of an environment more permanent than himself. His conscious and subconscious activities and his intuitive and deliberative plans associate him with his environment, its past and its future. In his more emotional moments, and in those respects where *s* can be contrasted with *c*, this association is often more vivid. The individual can be viewed as a psychical being (*ι*), who has acquired (*e*) language, beliefs, practices, etc., from the surrounding environment, and who develops as they bring out that which needed a form of expression.² Or we can consider him with (*b*) his body of beliefs and practices, and this *b* can be viewed objectively as something that grows and develops. In either case, we know the individual as a perfect blend of *ι* and *e* or *b*, but objective comparison enables us to sever his nature, tendencies, endowments, gifts, underlying feelings, etc., from the particular way in which they manifest and express themselves (cf. pp. 281 *seq.*). Already accustomed to look upon human instincts as "given," and as apart

¹ The subjective nature of discontinuity may also be illustrated by the varying attitudes to crises and difficulties (pp. 277, 294), the recognition of men of genius (pp. 98 *seq.*, 318), or of originality (p. 319 *seq.*); and the fact that though "individualism" is entirely normal we refer to intenser and more conspicuous examples. There seems to be a characteristic absence of objective difference between the most extraordinary and the most ordinary, while, on the other hand, the characteristic difference is felt to affect our *whole* selves.

² Cf. the development of ideas in the young (p. 238), a fusion of tendencies, dispositions, etc. (*ι*), with that which the environment provides (*e*). Cf. also p. 282 *seq.*

from the gifts of the environment, we can now think of a psychical nature which only exists for us in combination with e or b .¹

XIII. (a) The profoundest experiences and beliefs of man, when classified and compared, vary so seriously that they can have no objective validity—man's current highest truth is not precisely *the* Truth. And since e and b (see § XII.) are at an incomplete stage we can easily understand that there can be an advance in individual and in general human development. On the one hand, the individual can be viewed as persisting despite the changes in e and b ; and certainly we are convinced of our identity with our past or with our childhood. On the other hand, we are not conscious of the difference in ourselves between ι and e or b , or of the precise difference between present and earlier stages. Again, although our attitude feels "complete," as it were, and we aim at "objective" standpoints; yet, viewed more objectively, our attitude is incomplete or imperfect, and only less rudimentary and undifferentiated than it once was.²

(b) Though one may "feel" oneself to be part of a whole, a group, an environment, etc., the feeling expresses itself varyingly. Love of one's country does not preclude a lamentable ignorance of its confines in space or of its history in time. The psychical feeling (ι) is bound up with a "body" of data, memories, etc., which have no clear boundaries; the structural ι is embodied in such a way that it exists only in the form $\iota + b$, and though b may be said to vary, there are limits to its variation. In this way "bodies" are felt to be endangered, although, as a matter of fact, they are susceptible of considerable modification; and when there is some striking external

¹ $\iota + e$ (or b) are constant, and the precise formulation of the constituents can be left; cf. above, § IV. The study of ι thus involves the science of what we call "human nature."

² Cf. pp. 86 *seq.*, 89.

development in *b* we have to recognize that upon the indefinable *ι* depends the successful issue.¹

(*c*) A feeling of oneness, or union, or communion can manifest itself in ways externally different. It needs some form of expression, and in its more vivid or intense form is illustrated in the poetical, the mystical, and the religious temperaments. We can thus readily sever the purely psychological aspects (*ι*) from the more external (*b*) by which we recognize it. The failure to trace it does not prove its absence; in some form or other *ι* appears to be common to the race, and the "psychical oneness" would seem to correspond to the "physical" unity of the race.² Besides, when a feeling of "oneness" manifests itself in the course of individual development, we can hardly assume a "sudden" growth; observation, reflexion, and development commonly make us aware of that which already existed, but of which we were quite unconscious.

XIV. The feeling of Self enters the individual's growth supported by observation, reflexion, and introspection. Now, the state of experiencing (*e.g.* reading) is different from the less passive state of deliberate and guided reflexion upon the experience, past or present. In such reflexion "we" stand apart from ourselves, there is a severance which did not exist before. The Self is on a higher plane of development because of its more objective attitude to its own experience. The "bodily" self is sometimes felt to be secondary and inferior, there is a feeling of a superior and higher Self, and he who is controlled and guided by his external environment, can control and guide himself. Yet the consciousness of this difference between a higher and a lower or ordinary self is not regularly present. In some respects self-consciousness can tend to be disturbing, and excessive introspection is injurious: this Self is so bound up with

¹ See pp. 55, 62, 103, 121, etc.

² On "psychical" and "physical," see below, § XXIII. (*b*).

us that we cannot *consciously* keep the two apart. Nor can we imagine a sudden emergence of Self. Some mode of describing the Self in its relationship to the growing individual is needed. It is evident that there has been much unconscious reflexion upon experience, the conscious "selection" was preceded by an unconscious one; the process of detachment and of concentration upon one out of a number of things or aspects must have begun early (p. 153). Purposive activities had for their prelude those which we are tempted to call instinctive or mechanical. Because explicit consciousness did not intervene, or we cannot conceive or remember its intervention, early activities seem to be of another order than the present. Yet all higher processes of the adult had "rudimentary" beginnings, and the child is genetically connected with the adult. Hence, not only do we find an early psychical endowment, but we must postulate control, guidance, and all that helps to direct and synthesize life with all its beliefs and practices. The part played by the conscious Self is such that it must have a forerunner; whatever be the Self that controls; disciplines, and synthesizes, we must postulate a centre of control even at a very low level.

XV. However beneficial human instincts may be, they admit of being perverted; and though the instinct of self-preservation has its beneficial aspects, it does not necessarily betoken a very elevated Self. Modern psychological research has brought together a great deal of evidence for the nature of minds when uncontrolled, when badly or imperfectly co-ordinated, and when personality is abnormal or incoherent. The evidence is impressive for the result when there is an absence or a weakness of those regulative features and processes which characterize normal individuals and individual persons. Every one has a mass of confused and of classified memories and "psychical" data of all kinds; but unless there is a

central control, the individual is hardly a unit, rather is he like an aggregate of data as opposed to a more or less synthesized body of thought ; and he resembles a seething striving mob rather than a specific group of individuals with similar interests.¹ We may think of the individual as one who is associated with a psychical field, vaster than he is aware, of which he gains some possession in the course of his development. This psychical field is inchoate, undifferentiated, and undisciplined, with a certain power, energy, or ability to respond to appropriate stimuli.² Individual development is a vital process, for, if the growing feeling of Self and consciousness of power are not regulated, the result can be injurious for the individual and for society. Both history and ordinary life are full of men of very great psychical power, of strong personality, with exceptional energy, force, and momentum, men who exercise unusual or even extraordinary power for good or for evil, and invariably command a certain admiration. Although a man's activities are, in a sense, for some aspect or estimate of Self, all depends upon his particular conceptions of his place in the world around him. From the religious point of view, the implicit or explicit aspects of Self are of the first importance, for, while the distinctively religious view is that of a Supreme Power, in some way related to the individual ; Magic, the rival of Religion, is characterized by an attitude to external Superior Powers (or a Supreme Power) which has attributes of familiarity, indifference, or negligence.

XVI. The notion of a psychical field in which the Self develops and gains control finds analogies on a higher plane : (1) in the world of life, when *persons* have a

¹ Cf. above, p. 284, on the co-ordination of groups, and for the analogy of bodies of psychical data to bodies of men, cf. p. 285 n.

² Considering this psychical endowment, and the fact that there is so much of which one is not actually conscious, it is natural to suppose that there is a "psychical accompaniment" to every external expression even though it is not explicitly recognized (see § III.).

psychical control over others (*e.g.* the leader and his band, the orator and the impressionable crowd, the teacher and his class); and (2) the world of thought, when we find some control and influence exerted in the development of a study or of an environment.¹ But on the highest plane there is in religion the analogy of a Supreme Power, transcending individuals, and working upon or through minds of all grades and levels. In every case we have groups or "units" of a psychical nature containing within themselves the centre of control.² The psychical field contains the developing and controlling Self which, at one time, has its intuitions and convictions of a Superior Power related to itself, and, at another, virtually finds within itself its source of power. New problems now arise, involving conceptions of Personality.

XVII. (*a*) The comparative and critical study of religions has revealed (1) conspicuous *external* differences in the apprehension of some similar fundamental Reality, and (2) fundamental resemblances, subjective and *psychological*, in features distinctively and essentially religious. While in anthropomorphism man clothes his gods with human attributes, and even gives them a human shape, there is a great deal of evidence for non-anthropomorphic beliefs and ideas, which vary considerably, but have an underlying psychological similarity. Totemism and fetishism, the individual animal totems and animal spirit-guardians, the popular animal-cults of ancient Egypt—these show us the individual concentrating religious and

¹ See pp. 72, 100.

² We do not actually know of any complete units, or of absolutely closed systems. The terms (group, tribe, people, nation, etc.) refer to what are viewed as single "wholes," but really have larger connexions. The terms are convenient, necessary for facility of thought, and are due to a psychical process, a synthesizing, imposed upon us, and part of our given psychical nature. We should, however, distinguish (*i*) the fundamental tendency to see things as units and wholes from (*e*) the *particular* examples, since we can imagine units and wholes without the imperfections and errors which we see around us (*cf.* pp. 90 *sqq.*).

related ideas upon what tend to have human attributes though they have not human form. It is irresistible to compare the child's attitudes to the teddy-bear, the doll, and the living baby, and to observe the fundamental similarity in the psychological attitudes in spite of the great external differences. In the lower religions, although the "objects" are profoundly different—and we usually regard them from the outside—there is a certain similarity of attitude; the value of the cult lies not in the "object," but in the whole body of beliefs and practices. We pass insensibly from the non-anthropomorphic to the anthropomorphic, and although the attitude is varyingly shaped as the character of the "object" varies, there is no subjective gulf between the two phases of religion.¹

(β) Now, anthropomorphism cannot be regarded as primitive in the individual or in the race; nor is the term applicable either to the popular animal-cults in ancient Egypt, or to the distinctively spiritual and purified types of thought which explicitly avoid certain anthropomorphisms in the higher religions. Hence, we have (1) the transition from the pre-*a* to the *a*; (2) the co-existence of the *a* and the non-*a*; and (3) the appearance of the non-*a* as a transition from the *a*. Consequently, any given non-*a* feature could really belong to any of the three stages, and the pre-*a* and the non-*a* may wrongly be confused. The problem has arisen elsewhere (see p. 261); all non-*a* features will have something in common, but, belonging to different phases of development, they will no doubt have certain differences. It seems almost incredible that the pre-*a* and the non-*a* could be in every way similar. The problem is of exceptional importance for the psychology of religion, because the study of the development and vicissitudes of man's conceptions of a supreme Personal Power is interwoven with that of man's own psychical nature.

¹ Nor is there any gulf between the varying attitudes of the child. The teddy-bear or doll is "personal" directly the child treats it as such.

XVIII. Although there are characteristic transitions (α) from the pre-anthropomorphic stage to the anthropomorphic, and (β) to what may be called the post- or anti- α stage, we cannot call the latter a normal development; more regular, on the other hand, is the tendency to a purer anthropomorphism which rests upon purer ideas of human personality. To a certain extent the α and the non- α alternate in details and particulars.¹ So, too, percept and perceptual thinking alternate with conceptual thinking, although the former characteristically precedes the latter, even as the concrete precedes the abstract. There is a certain preference for concrete aids to more abstract thinking.² While the conceptual and abstract ideas represent a distinct advance, they may become too remote from experience and too abstract, just as non-anthropomorphic and spiritual ideas may be too much out of harmony with ordinary life. The effort to improve and advance upon a certain stage does not give the next stage, it often gives us that which lies outside the line of development or that contributes to the next stage.³ Next, the percept and perceptual thought seem to differ from the concept and conceptual thought more from the point of view of the observer than from that of the subject. Just as the same or a similar subjective attitude reappears in "lower" and "higher" forms, according as the "object" is animal, human, or purely spiritual, so, too, perceptual and conceptual thinking have a certain common ground.⁴ For, first, percepts after all certainly need an interpretation; sense-given

¹ Analogous is the alternation in the child's attitude to its toys.

² See pp. 51 *seq.*, 263, 329 n., 351.

³ At the present day tendencies suggested by current religious thought, whether we may call them non-religious, anti- or post-religious, will feel themselves to be the next stage; but, as these pages have tried to show, they represent only a section of the whole which is in process of development. The post-X will often represent a specialistic, detached, and partial aspect of the whole of which X is an integral part.

⁴ This can be regarded as ι taking the forms $\iota+a$, $\iota+b$, etc.

data do not always carry their meaning in themselves.¹ Often, what is immediately apprehended can only be formulated by conceptual and abstract thought. Moreover, while the dissolution of the individual is—viewed externally—the end of him, a “way of thinking” implicitly “sees” some continuity and interconnexion which are not given by the senses. The study of religions emphasizes the problem of a fundamental way of thinking that underlies thought and is sometimes so rudimentary as hardly to deserve the name of “thought.”

XIX. The difficulty is, partly, to formulate facts. Animals and young children will show “gratitude,” and the whip has a “meaning” for the dog as has the bottle for the babe. On the lower psychical levels there is that which corresponds to features on the higher, but our mode of dealing with the evidence implies processes that are not applicable. It is premature to apply ideas of intellect, ethics, and morality to insects and animals, but from a psychological point of view the differences between them and us are of degree, not of kind. All psychical ability is effective within its limits, it is capable of development, and it is easier to suppose that, in the course of organic evolution, the sense-organs did not “create” the ability, but that they differentiated it.² It is interesting to notice the amount of “thought” of which man is capable without consciously employing percept or concept; and just as we literally “see” physical objects, so we “see” in our minds situations, solutions, lines of thought, which are neither “imaged” nor formulated. This psychical ability

¹ See Index, *s.v.* “Sense-data.”

² Even with us the differentiation is not always complete; a noise will suggest a colour, a colour a sound, and music will “speak” in a way that words fail to express. From the evolutionary point of view we postulate a psychical ability differentiating itself—and perhaps still incompletely differentiated. On the other hand, many writers would seem to believe that with the elimination of the differentiating sense-organs we eliminate all possible sources of psychical activity and inter-communication.

stands in obvious need of direction and guidance ; and it furnishes us with the notion of an endowment and a process in which ideas of value or of personality seem to enter only when there is an external expression. Finally, gestures can be immediately understood, there is an immediate interpretation ; the animal understands the angry note and the babe the mother's smile. But it is not so easy to explain *precisely* why the angry note or the smile should be interpreted as they are, and as they are meant to be interpreted. Evidently, a feeling expresses itself, and evidently there is an ability to make the appropriate interpretation. But this seems to be intelligible only on the assumption of a common psychical field with the expression of a feeling on the part of one "individual," and the interpretation of it on the part of another. An intercommunication of this sort—a nexus underlying all "separate individuals"—is common in the world of life, notably in the psychology of the crowd, and wheresoever we hover between individual personalities and what may be called the "corporate" individuality or personality of groups.

XX. The effective development of the individual from babyhood onwards is the result of a multitude of contributing activities, many of which seem irrelevant or of merely transient value.¹ Much of one's work in the past appears wasted or lost ; although every earlier activity will commonly produce something effective or useful for a later one, and the purpose of the one passes into another purpose. Something is cast aside, something is retained for another activity. The past has thus brought an experience applicable to new situations. What is gained and retained belongs to the general, the universal, the applicable ; it concerns process and ability. What is left behind, as it were, belongs to concrete situations

¹ Analogies to this can readily be found, *e.g.* in the development of a study ; cf. p. 99 *seq.*

and conditions, to particularities, details, and unessential events. For example, at school one learned arithmetic, and acquired certain information irrespective of apples, passing trains, emptying and filling baths, and financial vicissitudes. At the same time, however, the concrete problems gave one a stock of very miscellaneous experience. Each particular problem divided itself into (*a*) arithmetical rules, applicable to similar appropriate examples, and (*b*) data which might or might not be useful, or which went to build up experience quite generally. In all concrete situations we come to apprehend that which is more generally applicable within its limits. We come to recognize implicitly that "honesty is the best policy," irrespective of the honest behaviour of A or B. Moreover, it is intuitively assumed that the lesson will be intuitively learned, and that the history and the story will teach their lesson without the necessity of a laborious and persistent insistence upon the essentials, as apart from the particulars of the concrete situation. In imitation there is an instinctive tendency to aim at what is thought to be essential; and when A copies B's eye-glass, collar, tie, or hat, the external act embodies what is felt to be essential—it is personality appealing to personality. The failure to distinguish the essential from the unessential explains many of the strange and irrational practices of savages and others. There is an instinctive tendency to throw off particulars and to retain the general, the essential, and the applicable; the process is fundamental, and irrespective of good or bad aspects; it is a psychical process, perfectly normal, but profoundly potent, since in the discovery of essentials and in sound generalization lies the road to all advance.

XXI. We turn now to another aspect of the Essential. The comparative study of mystical and related experiences throws a flood of light upon these rather rare psychical states. The expression varies according to the individual's

religion and temperament ; it varies in its ethical value for the individual and in its influence upon his mental life and social behaviour. The state is a " whole " one, and the experiences are felt to be entirely valid, though, viewed objectively, they are neither complete nor final. They range from the most spiritual and exalted to that which is outspokenly condemned ; mysticism has no severer critic than the mystics : those who realize profound experiences can the less readily tolerate that which is contrary to their inmost convictions. Now, the mystical states are characterized by a keen feeling of closest relationship or communion with the Deity, the Divine Principle, the Soul of the World, the Ultimate—in fine, man experiences in a vividly *personal* manner his ultimate conceptions of the Universe. His own personality is very explicitly concerned. His experiences and his earlier knowledge and beliefs are intertwined, the former realize the essential facts of the latter, and enhance them ; but the latter were already in his mind, and they represent ideas which had already been accepted. In some sense the mystic is already one before he has his mystical experiences. Besides, after all, mysticism is only a more extraordinary form of what is more ordinary in less intense forms. Almost every religion has its convictions of union and communion with a Power outside the individual, and the mystics exercise influence because ordinary men already have the intuitive or implicit feeling of some relation with something in the world outside them.¹

XXII. But the mystical experience of union and communion is, properly speaking, balanced by the conviction of the great gulf between the human and the divine, between ordinary life and that which, though in some way associated with human life, transcends it. This gulf is generally felt in all religion, and its existence is inculcated in various ways. Where there is a sense of the

¹ See, further, the writer's *Foundations of Religion*, pp. 48 sqq.

“nearness” or “immediacy” of the Supernatural (the Sacred, Holy, Divine, etc.), there is also the recognition of the danger of ignoring or neglecting it. Upon this danger every religion that merits the name has insisted, and this paradoxical nearness and remoteness, this intermingling of supreme good and grave risk, is the fundamental feature in all “Supernaturalism.”¹ Apart from the moral, ethical, and mental risks run by the individual in all kinds of exceptional psychical states, especially striking, from the religious point of view, is the abhorrence of any attitude that profanes the Sacred and ignores the gulf.² It is an attitude that readily comes in when the Self has a certain consciousness of its power. While, in every case, the Self has a feeling of added strength, power, and authority, profound differences arise according as the feeling is shaped in a way that is distinctively religious, social, anti-religious, non-religious, anti-social, etc. The comparison permits us to distinguish (*d*) a particular, rare, and exalted psychical state, and (*e*) the varying expressions; and among the latter, although we can distinguish (from our particular point of view) the religious from the rest, it is difficult if not impossible to say where a dividing-line can be objectively drawn. The study of these profound aspects of man’s psychical nature leads to results of great importance for religion, logic, and philosophy on the one hand, and for human personality on the other. We have here the deepest recognizable experiences of the individual, and it seems possible to say that a “psychical experience” can express itself in varying ways (*e.g.* religious, poetical, philosophical), so that the distinctively “religious” experience is only one form of the experience. In other

¹ See, *e.g.*, pp. 188 *sqq.*, 259 *seq.*

² Magic (p. 177 n.) comes in when there is already Religion; it presupposes the existence, past and present, of a religious or a “pre-religious” attitude; cf. § VIII.

words, "religious" experience is not a thing absolutely apart from all other experience, it is a particular intensity and expression of experience, and the most vital for the individual and for society. Hence, for example, when, in Christian and other literature, one encounters the ideas of Heaven and Hell, these are not "survivals"—we should still have to explain their origin and their persistence psychologically—but they are psychical experiences expressing themselves in a particular way. The study of religions inevitably comes to involve psychology; the more elaborate religious doctrines (*e.g.* of the Trinity) are essentially psychological, and there can hardly be any doubt that as modern psychological research is linked up with other departments of knowledge, religious experience will admit of re-interpretation and reformulation. And in this case religious doctrines will once more be in harmony with the best thought and knowledge.

XXIII. (a) Man's deepest convictions of an external Power do not necessarily recognize a *personal* one. On the other hand, it is a significant fact that there are striking characteristic differences among individuals all the world over; the individual—be he totemist or fetish-worshipper, be his cult anthropomorphic or non-anthropomorphic, be his ideas spiritual, philosophical, poetical, etc.—presents a very considerable variation with certain underlying points of resemblance. If we compare the various convictions and ideas we may distinguish the "personal" from the "non-personal." But we shall be guided by our particular definitions and conceptions, and these rest upon our own growth and development. This is vital, because at certain stages the conception of personality is not keenly felt, and the soundest conception involves not merely a fuller knowledge of Self, but a conception of the place of the Self in the Universe. The stage where the conception of "personality" first appears will be preceded, not by the non-personal or impersonal, but,

logically, by the pre-personal. We have a rudimentary stage where ideas of "personality" are premature, and where the child has no clear notion of itself. At this stage, his activities seem to promote the growth of personality, just as among the lower races the members of the totem clan are getting to know themselves, and are laying the foundation of an anthropomorphism which becomes explicit when opportunity allows.¹

(b) Dealing with human beings, we are naturally obliged to use terms that distinguish them from inorganic objects. So, also, the term "psychical" is more natural than "physical" when mental processes are under discussion. On the other hand, there are cases where both terms beg the question, and one is influenced by definitions and by particular prejudices. In the evolution of the Universe, the stage where "psychical" is first relevant has a pre-psychical stage, and in like manner the "physical" will logically have a pre-physical stage. Imperfection of thought obliges us to apply conceptions from one order to another, and thus we speak of Nature anthropomorphically, although we should not agree to the sweeping inferences that could be based upon our words.² The safest plan, therefore, is to realize the peculiar character of the language used in our analytical and specialistic enquiries, and to reconsider their significance when we proceed to synthesize and co-ordinate. The error of applying "physical" and non-psychical terminology to beings who are obviously psychical, is as great as that of extending the "psychical" even to the inorganic. And while one tendency is to apply the same term to the different orders of activity, a sounder synthesis could be gained

¹ Especially instructive for this is the study of the "individual totems" and the North American animal "spirit guardians," which are *individual* and not *clan* property.

² So in scientific and other literature the environment is often spoken of as an agent; the procedure is convenient, and, indeed, necessary, but few trouble to ask what is really implied in the words.

by recognizing a fundamental activity differentiated in the various ways in which we distinguish such manifestations of it as we recognize.¹

(c) "Personal" has an antecedent stage which is not to be styled forthwith "impersonal."² It is important to observe also that ideas of "personality" can be extended by reference, not to single persons, but to groups of persons which admit of being regarded as units (see § XVI.). For example, the orator and the mob represent on occasion one single psychical unit, analogous to a "person," though of a higher order; and wheresoever we can trace communities or peoples that in some respects or on certain emotional occasions act as one, we can gain a notion of "personality" superior to that of a single individual. Although our terms apply to single individuals, the individual is a part of a greater whole, and to confine their significance to the transient parts of that whole is to lose sight of their collective force. The notion of personality inevitably involves a feeling of *something* of which the individual is part.³

XXIV. (a) In the psychical realm we have the field, the developing individual, and the Supreme Power. We cannot imagine the individual emerging from this field; a controlling, correcting influence appears early, and religion emphasizes a relationship between Man and God such that man is of God, returns to be with Him, and in his growing consciousness becomes aware of this relationship.⁴

¹ Thus, "physical" and "psychical" power or ability would differ only in the particular manifestation of the power or ability.

² Against the denial of all suggestion of personality to early religious objects (especially in totemism), see Professor Mark Baldwin, "The Religious Interest," in the *Sociological Review*, October 1913 (especially Part II.).

³ Very significant is the increasing interest in the conception of "personality"; the literature is steadily growing.

⁴ One may recall the words of Marcus Aurelius: "Every man's soul is a portion of the Deity, and derived from thence. Take care that the Divinity within you has a creditable charge to preside over."

Man is, as it were, an integral part of the unit—and forthwith there is an easy road to Pantheism! But there is the profoundest difference between the parts of the unit. Already evolution has familiarized us with a development and a differentiation whereby a single unit becomes a number of "parts," differing widely in function, value, and permanence, but including always the essential "nucleus" which is found even in the cell. The fundamental and underlying similarity does not exclude the profoundest differences in course of development; nor do the greatest "discontinuities" or gulfs—viz. between the sacred and the non-sacred—appear to be ultimate or final (p. 402 *seq.*). At the same time, these differences and gulfs are profoundly real to all individuals; their existence and the existence of that which is harmful and evil cannot be dismissed. On the other hand, what is harmful and useless at any given time may not be so ultimately.¹

(b) Everywhere we see "wholes" which prove to be only parts of larger ones. The whole at any given moment contains the essential, the persisting, and the developing, together with the non-essential and the transitory. But the latter are so only as regards some particular "whole," and when we sever in A the essential *a* from the non-essential *b*, the latter will become essential in another "whole," B, which in turn will have its own transitory features. As with the tree so with the body of thought, there is a great deal of foliage which can be spared and will some day disappear and play another part; the

¹ Cf. above, on the existence and estimate of error and evil, pp. 101 *seq.*, 108, 110, 298, 366 *seq.* Notice should be taken of the difference between concrete situations and what partakes of a more ideal or idealistic character. For example, man may have intuitive ideas of God's relations to man and of Divine forgiveness, but in any given concrete situation the feeling of Divine displeasure or of God's remoteness is absolute. This applies generally, so that although the individual can intuitively and by reflexion gain what to him are the greatest truths, he cannot always apply them to any situation. Development fundamentally involves the consciousness of truths that are structural, skeletal, spiritual, animating, and the like.

twigs and boughs are not so essential and integral as might appear, but it is almost invariably impossible to determine precisely what can and what cannot be excised. The careers of plants and of bodies of thought, like the careers of individuals, inevitably lead us to conceive an absolute or ultimate whole which shall be the complete whole of which everything discoverable are parts. But the conception of the "structural" nature of such a whole is not the same as that attempt to state it, which limits, not its development, for that is impossible, but the development of ideas of it as knowledge increases. Whatever the ultimate "whole" may be, the effort can be made so to determine our ideas of it that they may if necessary develop and that the more essential and structural features may be analytically severable from the developing, the changing, and the alterable.

XXV. Modern thought leads to theories of the evolution of the Universe; ideas of creation become more difficult, while those of growth and development—and from very rudimentary forms—are more familiar, as we observe organic life, the world of Nature, the world of thought and the development of "bodies" of thought. Thus, we of to-day can conceive stages, A, B, C, etc., marked by the appearance of distinctive features (*e.g.* life, man, etc.). Hereby vital questions are raised of the origin of Life and Mind, and of the part taken in the process of evolution by the Deity. But the problem of the remote past must be taken with that of the representatives of the stages (*cf.* p. 384). Here we observe that by deliberate selection and excision we sever data into distinctive classes, A, B, C, etc.; and, removing them from the only environment in which we know them, we reconstruct from them the theoretical evolution, A, B, C, etc. But although the division is made according to our definitions (of matter, life, mind, etc.), there are cases that are doubtful, variable, and intermediate. Every pair must

have something in common; and in the world around us, where things are in a context, there must be an “ ι ” common to A and B , to B and C , to A and C . Therefore there must be an ι common to them all (§ IV.). Besides, when any stage (*e.g.* B) *first* appeared in the evolution of the Universe, there must have been an antecedent stage where, either there was an earlier form of b , or if there was not b , according to our conceptions of it, there were the necessary preliminary conditions (§ VIII.). The first appearance of the distinctive stage B demands preparatory conditions, rather than the sudden intervention of some entirely new factor.¹ What is essential to our conceptions of A , B , C , etc. cannot be kept apart from our theory of the processes in the development of A , B , C , etc.; and since the former depend upon a synthetical view of some “whole” which we proceed to analyse and cut up, it is unmethodical to put together a new synthesis, a new conception of the Universe, and ignore anything that helped to give us our preliminary synthesis.

XXVI. (a) If the evolution of the Universe was at all in harmony with the processes with which we are familiar, we can imagine a differentiation from what might be called a “rudimentary” form. This is not from the fragmentary and incomplete to the complete. The child develops, not one arm or leg at a time, but from movements “irregular” to regular, from the “inchoate” to the articulated and modulated. And if the Universe were that of which we now see some of the differentiated and developed parts, it is clear that, so far as all our analogies go, we must postulate something that controls, directs, and regulates; and also we must admit at any given moment the existence of a nucleus (*i.e.* of the permanent and the essential) by

¹ Even this new factor would be a constituent of the total environment in the earlier stages. (On the interconnexions the present writer has found much that is suggestive in the study by Erasme de Majewski, *La Science de la Civilisation : Prolégomènes et bases pour la Philosophie de l'histoire et la Sociologie* (Paris, 1910).)

the side of that which in any given form is (or was) unessential, transient, and perhaps injurious.

(b) But our conceptions of the Universe are of a twofold order. (1) We can reflect upon the Universe, and upon this town or country, and upon books, ink, and pens—in a word, the Universe is an object of our thought, of detached, specialized, and concentrated reflexion. On the other hand (2), the Universe is also the whole of which we are a part, and our beliefs and behaviour associate us with that portion of it which we call the environment (§ XII. *seq.*). The more carefully we reflect the more likely we are to leave ourselves out of consideration. Every specialistic and analytical scrutiny is apt to leave out of its synthesis the individual himself; and the mind that discovers and reflects most “scientifically” is apt to be the one that would represent the Universe without a Mind or any psychical process! The synthetical view of the Universe involves the inclusion of ourselves, our development, our attitudes and our way of thinking.

(c) But of the evolution of the ultimate whole of which we are a part we cannot speak. We cannot directly see our own self and its development; our conceptions of a Deity evolve, but we have no grounds for saying that God has developed or evolved. Ideas of the Universe have developed, but not the Universe itself, unless we unwarrantably narrow down the term. The notion of development and evolution is applicable only to “parts” (p. 396); it is exceedingly valuable as a regulative principle, it is essential for our life and thought, but it does not seem to be more than an indispensable way of thinking, not applicable to the ultimate Reality.

XXVII. There is an invariable tendency to aim at the synthetical and the complete, the regular and the permanent, the definite and the clearly-cut. It is static rather than dynamic. But throughout all life and thought there is a blend of the essential and the unessential, of

the permanent and the transient ; and the more elaborate our syntheses, the more they resemble some leafy tree which, though in summer it may form one single organic whole, will be stripped in winter and prepare itself for another covering. The ultimate realities may or may not be discoverable by *human* beings ; but again and again the nuclear and the transitory are interwoven, the kernel and the shell confused. Nor does our mind seem able to apprehend the realities as they are. While the intuitive and immediate apprehension of things owes everything to all prior experience, and the sublimest mystical states are conditioned by earlier knowledge, the reflective mind does not recognize things as they really happen. The mind must select and concentrate, it must disintegrate and treat things under partial aspects ; it must ignore resemblances and fail to perceive all the differences (pp. 395, 398 n.). It cannot comprehend levels very different from its own ; it must project its estimate into others, and must regard as "unhistorical" or as "superstitious" what in its proper level may be "historical" and "religious." Its language is too imperfect, and while it is a very great advance to recognize this, there remains the fact that only by sober reflexion, and not by impulse or intuition, has man, as a whole, actually progressed. Man's movements are experimental, his best tools inadequate ; and the remarkable feature is the explicit recognition that there must be something more real than what is apprehended. Although human beings may not be able to realize the greater realities in their completeness, it is characteristic of development that step by step we find a prelude to that which later enters into the light of day. Man becomes conscious of what belongs to the next stage. Religion has its intuitions and convictions of the transience of individuals, and has so to reconcile men to their environment that their activities may be for the highest good of themselves and of it. The individual, half conscious

of a later stage, tends to confuse his own psychical development with that of his own environment, his more transient bodily existence with the more permanent "whole," and his own psychical nature with the beliefs and behaviour whereby it expresses itself. But while Religion unites the individual with something more permanent and more perfect; when it aims at a certain completeness and synthesis in theology and in doctrine, it too may blend the transient and the lasting. The craving for permanence and completeness is a persisting instinct that needs expression (p. 353 *seq.*).

XXVIII. Thus, the Study of Religions inevitably leads to the deepest questions, which, however, do not fall within the scope of these chapters. Problems of logic, philosophy, and methodology are involved, to which these pages can, at the best, serve only as prolegomena. We have been noticing the differing external forms of something underlying, and the significance of the differences; there is that which continues in spite of development, and lives only through development. By repeated comparison we ascertain something of processes, needs, tendencies, and fundamental psychical desires. Religion is seen to be, not a thing apart, but that which involves the depths of man's psychical nature. And these depths everywhere directly concern Religion, even though in any given case Religion, *as we understand it*, may be absent. The fact of "experience" is fundamental, and while the Study of Religions deals with particular expressions and interpretations, a more synthetical effort will recognize the problem of the psychical nature of man—man as a portion of the Universe—the problem of the real significance of all profound and synthesizing experience. An attempt has been made in these pages to illustrate a method which leaves the ultimate problems on one side, handles beliefs and behaviour, and seeks to understand their significance. A distinction is drawn between the

psychical nature of man and his particular beliefs and behaviour, between the structural or skeletal aspects and the relatively variable and alterable. The objective study of "bodies" of thought has led to results which, though Religion did not always seem to be affected, directly affect our ideas of it, and which bear upon the ultimate problems in that we can see, in some measure, how men apprehend their realities and are governed by their syntheses. By repeated comparison we can gain, not perhaps positive fundamental "facts," but what is of positive application; one may learn something of the nature of the ultimate realities, though one may not know the realities themselves (see p. 391). The critical study of religions throws light upon what men have *thought*, and the study of what is *thought* of things is often more tangible and immediately helpful than the enquiry into the "things-in-themselves." At all events, one gains some notion of the movements of thought which may in some measure correct certain erroneous and misleading presuppositions.

XXIX. The world's religions offer a fine field for sympathetic and critical study, and the study is of the greatest value at an age of transition such as this is. It must be remembered that many questions are raised, not all of them explicitly or distinctively religious, which are of the utmost importance for the history of thought. In the evolution of civilization Religion has been linked with all life and thought; all aspects of civilization and culture have been interconnected. Each stage has meant an increase in man's power for good and for evil, and the present age, with its deep examination of man and of his nature, has been gaining a knowledge and an opportunity fraught with tremendous consequences for the future of the race. The responsibility is a heavy burden: the toil may be hard, the sacrifice great; but the reward will be abounding. And, inasmuch as existing conditions at

any moment are the outcome of all that has hitherto preceded, not this age alone is responsible for its burdens. Not only can the dead be said to have their share of the responsibility (see pp. 291, 293, 350), but all that which helps man to work out his career is equally involved. Thus, the living are not alone in their endeavour to carry out those aims and ideals which step by step have made the gulf between the primitive prehistoric man-beast and ourselves. In some way man has been able to advance from the humblest and lowliest state, and it is impossible to ignore the conclusion that the factors that made for success in the past are indispensable for the future.

XXX. The unbiased student of religions can hardly escape the conviction that the Supreme Power, whom we call God, while enabling man to work out, within limits, his own career, desires the furtherance of those aims and ideals which are for the advance of mankind. The Study of Religions is the study of an ascent of thought, a purifying of motive, and an increasing recognition of the significance of human personality. It is the study of a Power, *personally* related to man—as near to man as one thought is to another, a Power so transcendent and ineffable that mankind, with one consent, has inculcated the fact of the great gulf between the human and the divine, but a Power so near at hand that mankind—once more with one consent—has everywhere explicitly or implicitly recognized its help. And while the Love of God has always been for the “whole,” the evolution of civilization and culture goes with an increasing understanding of God and of the Universe, and of what is entailed in God’s Love for the Universe. The Study of Religions in elucidating the recognition of God’s nearness to man unites at once man’s reverence and fear of God and his honesty to his race.

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THE END

